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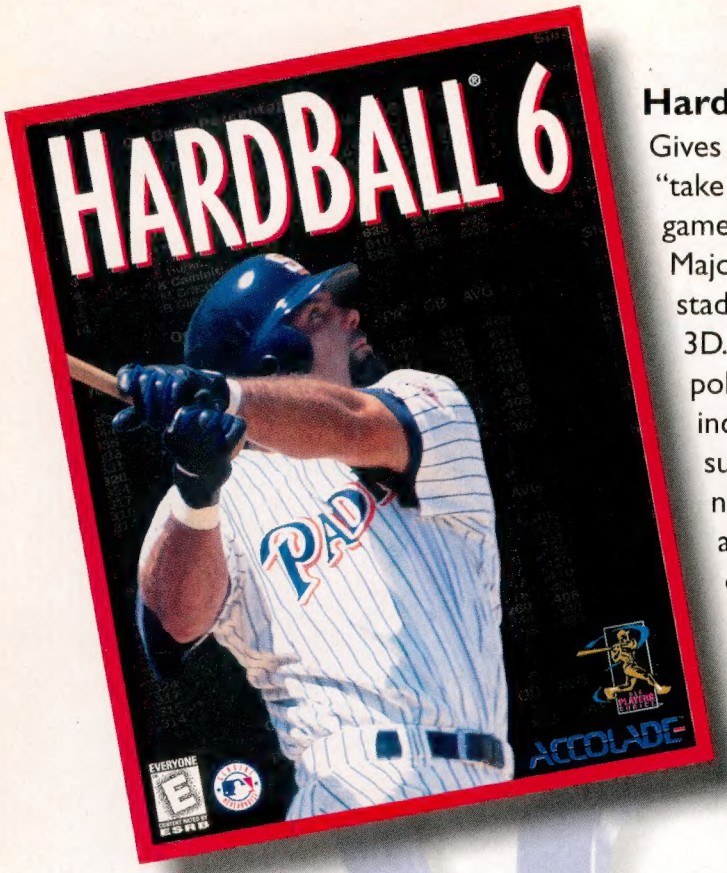

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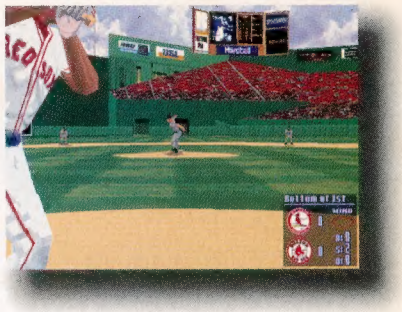

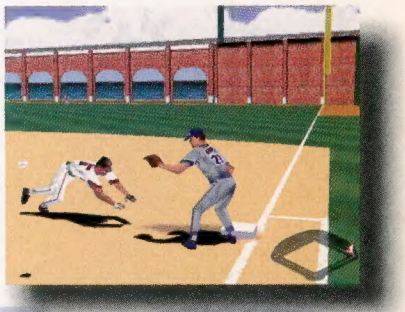

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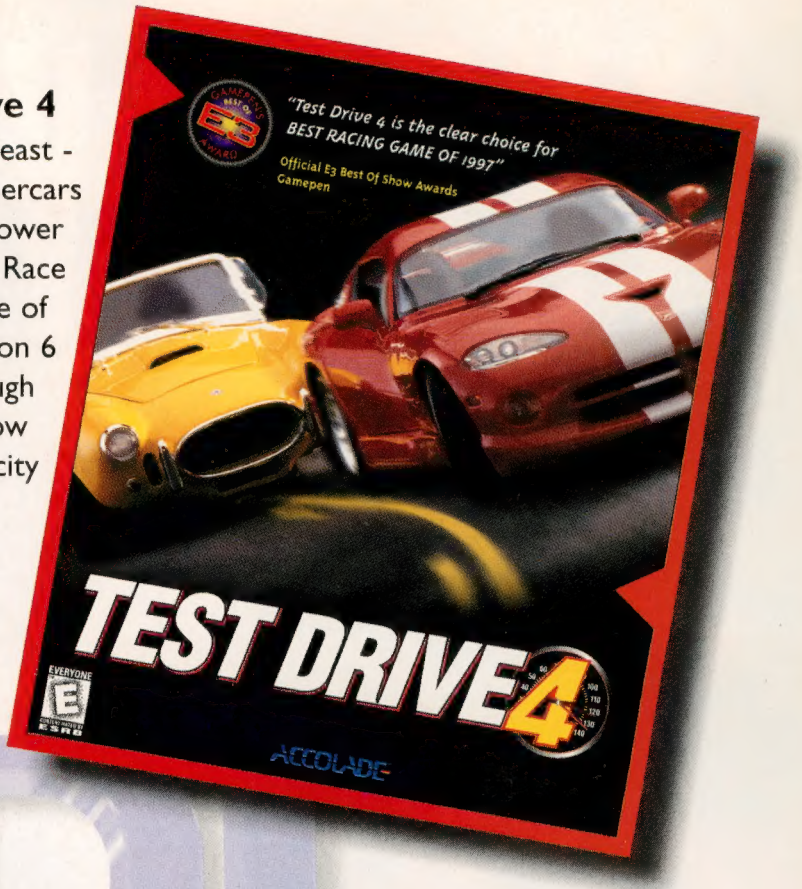

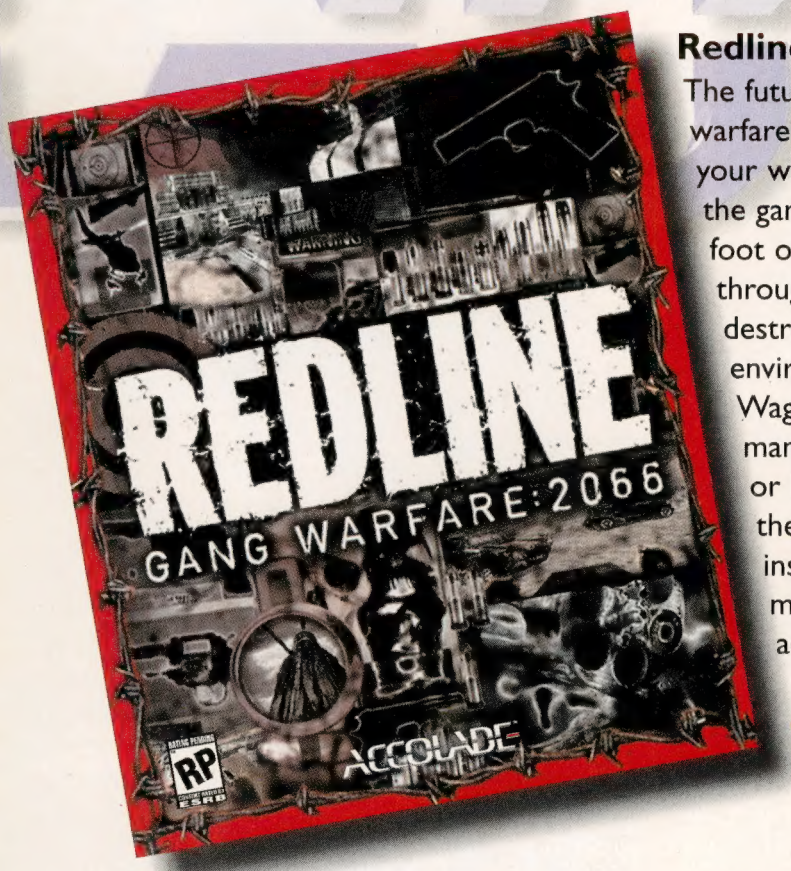

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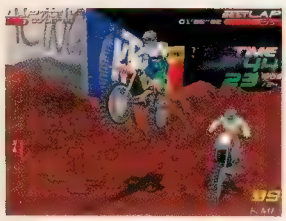

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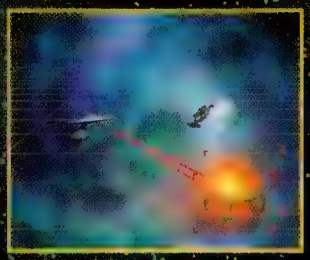
COVER STORY

WARP SPEED!

88

Captain, sensors indicate the presence of several cloaked *Star Trek* games closing on our position. Two of them appear to be maneuvering strategically, one moving rapidly, while another advances and then stops to consider its next move. Two of them are making straight for us with weapons loaded and ready to fire. The last one is an adventure game for which there are no convenient metaphors. I suggest we raise shields, order some take-out, and prepare for battle!



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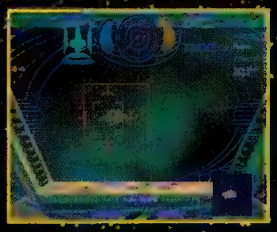

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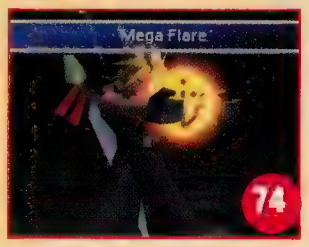

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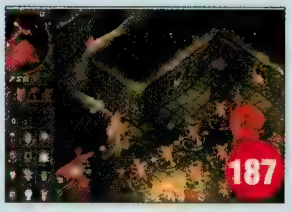

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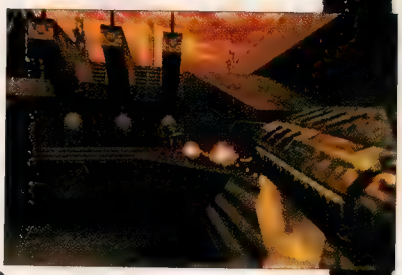

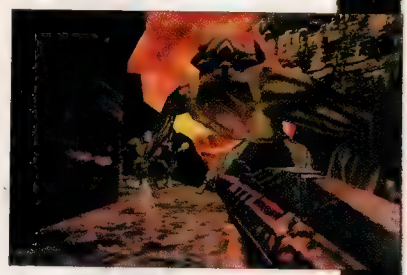

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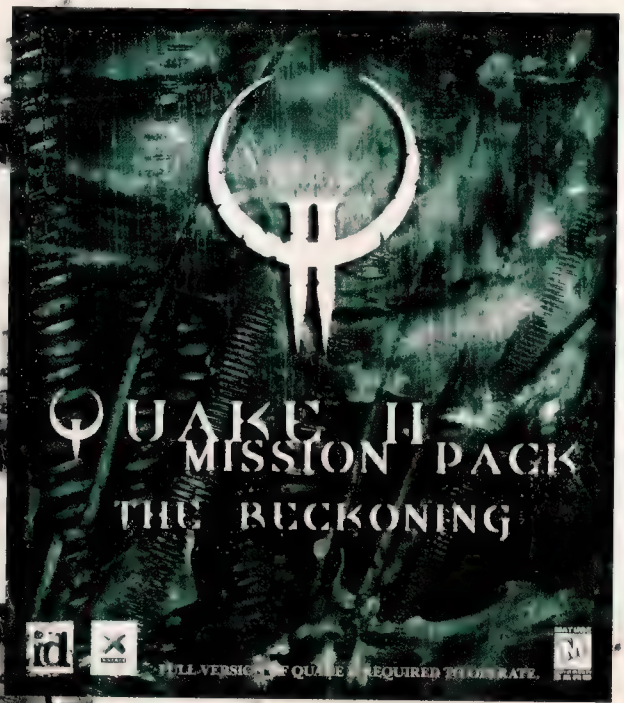

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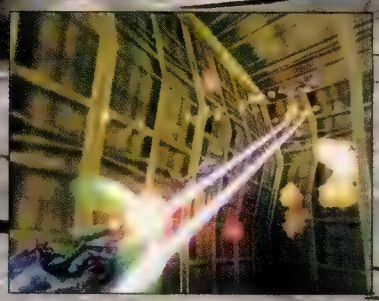

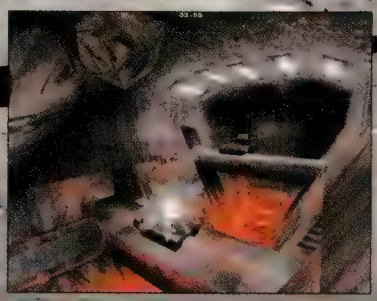

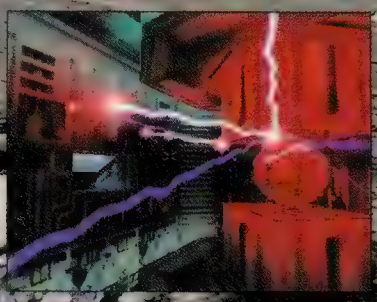

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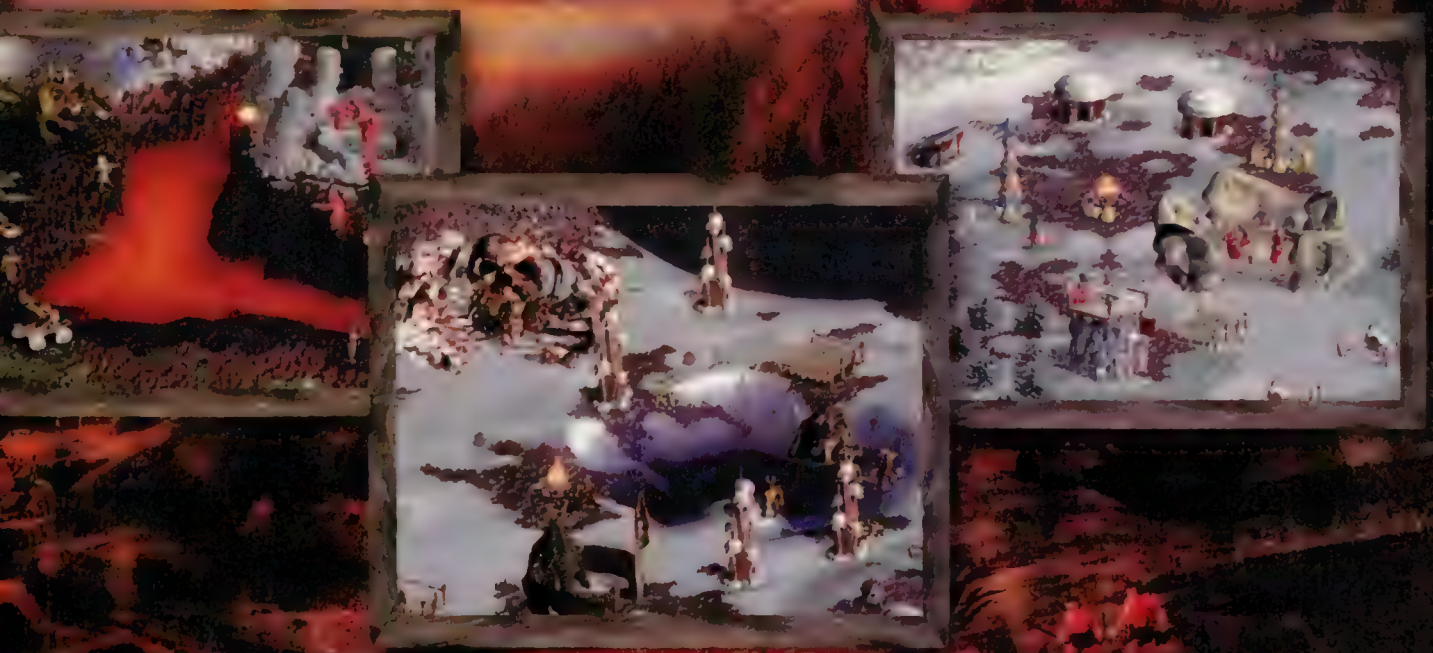

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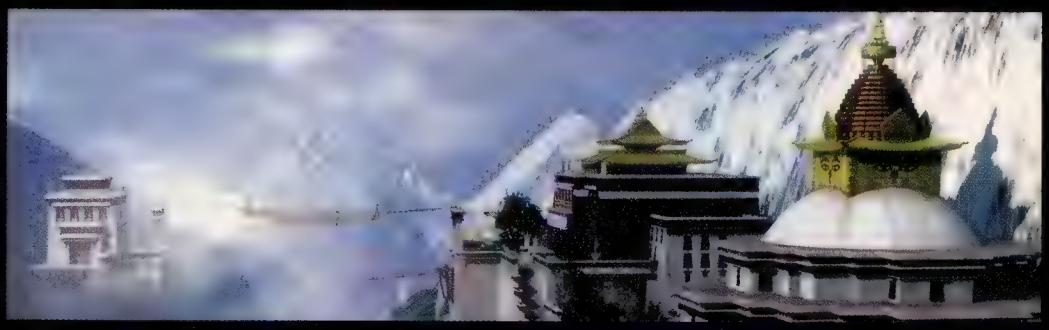

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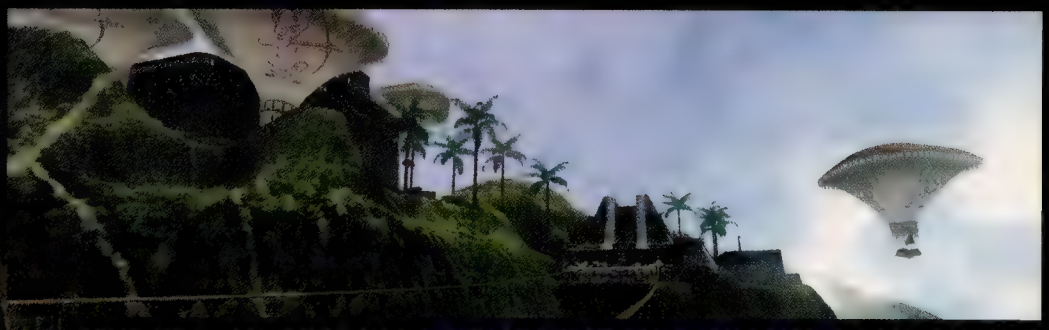

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Are U.S. Gamers Provincial?

European and U.S. Games—*Vive la Différence!*

I couldn't believe I was being so candid. I was conversing with a European software executive at a cocktail party on the French Riviera, and the setting must have loosened me up. "To be honest," I intoned as the self-appointed Ugly American, "we used to have a term for European software when I first came into the industry. We called it 'Eurotrash.'" I'm not sure I could have made a worse impression if I'd interrupted the elegant soireé by dropping my hors d'oeuvre on her dress shoes. But let's face it, I didn't become the "jwilson slime" in ULTIMA ONLINE by mincing words, did I?

"Don't worry," the former minister in me consoled her. "We don't call it that anymore.

"There was a good reason for calling it that in the old days," I said, continuing my brief history lecture. "At that time, much European software was unfinished. The shelf life in European retailers was so short that the publishers merely threw spaghetti on the walls to see what would stick, and the games were so tough that few gamers really finished them, anyway. We referred to run, shoot, and die-a-lot games with no real endings. And there were lots of features that were advertised and in place on the game interfaces that were never implemented when the software was shoved onto the shelves. Then along came companies like Bullfrog, and our perceptions of European software began to change. I'd have to say that they are very different, now."

She smiled a pleased smile, and I found myself relieved that her eyes hadn't glazed over and begun that virtual cursor scanning for someone more interesting with whom to converse. Then she asked a number of important questions. "What are the differences between European and U.S. games? Why don't extremely good games, such as DUNGEON KEEPER, do better in the States?"

> **"We used to have a term for European software. We called it 'Eurotrash.'"**

This column is a more considered version of the answers I gave her. Perhaps the insights will encourage some U.S. gamers to try some software they wouldn't ordinarily consider, and perhaps they will help some designers cross over into more global design qualities. They are, of course, generalizations. As such, there is sure to be some debate in coming months.

There appears to be a cultural dichotomy between depth and realism. Europeans like loads of depth in their games. They like to micromanage systems, resources, characters, and units. As a result, they are very comfortable with menu-intensive screens that may go several screens deep within a given interface. U.S. gamers want ease-of-use. We want to be able to control whatever we can, but we want to get to it quickly, make an adjustment, and get out.

Gamers in the U.S. and Canada seem to like realism. We really care if the adjustment on a car doesn't provide performance according to an accurate physics model. We really care if the sports game can be edited to provide up-to-date authentic teams. European soccer games seldom contain all of the real players and teams, yet they seem to fare as well without them. We really care if all the features of a plane are in the product or not. European gamers would prefer to spend their time planning a fictitious mission and getting into hot air-to-air and air-to-ground action very quickly after that. Canal+, the French television channel, has just introduced ALAIN PROUST'S GRAND PRIX RACING. It looks nice, but doesn't seem to have the robust set-up options of a CART PRECISION RACING or GRAND PRIX LEGENDS. Gremlin is working on a hockey title for its new Fox Sports series of games. You can bet that the league play and editing functions will not be as robust as those in NHL '98, but you may well have better control of the players.

Further, Europeans tend to be more eclectic in their acceptance of art forms. They love 3D graphics like those in Cryo's GADGET: PAST AS FUTURE (based on Haruhiko Shono's art concepts), Infogramme's OUTCAST (first-person action in an alternate world), Gremlin's BLADE (a first-person medieval adventure), and RUSHDOWN (3D racing in kayaks, on snowboards, and on bicycles); but they also embrace cartoon-style graphics, such as those in Infogramme's upcoming JEST (an adventure in the DISCWORLD style) or comic art as in Psygnosis' SHADOW MASTER.

In short, we should be happy we live in a world where we can get different games from different cultures. One thing's for sure: We don't have the term "Eurotrash" to kick around anymore.

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Computer Gaming World

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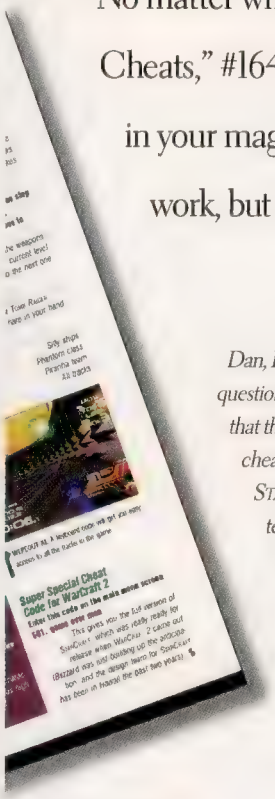
Feeling Cheated



No matter what I do, cheat #501 won't work ("501 Cheats," #164). Is it even real? I assumed so since it was in your magazine. I've tried everything to get it to work, but it doesn't. What's the deal?

Dan Schnaible
via the Internet

Dan, Dan, Dan. Your letter represents hundreds more all asking the same question. We were amazed at how many people put so much faith in CGW that they never stopped to ask a few questions about that now-infamous cheat. The cheat, of course, claimed to provide the full version of StarCraft *from* WarCraft II. *We thought the line about the design team taking two years off to vacation in Hawaii was a dead giveaway, not to mention the fact that there's never been a first-rate, never-before-released title "hidden" in a three year-old-game. But you believed us, and for that we have only ourselves to blame for building your trust and then playing havoc with it. All we can say is we're sorry to lead you on and we promise not to mask jokes with subtle giveaways. Now if you'll turn this magazine sideways you'll see a $1,000 bill hidden between the pages—that's a joke. See, we're learning.*

JUST IN SLIME

I thought you'd like to know that some of the slimes in Ultima Online are now called "jwilson." I guess Origin didn't like *CGW* giving UO "The Coaster of the Year" very much, hehehe.

Phil Rystov
via the Internet

Johnny Wilson responds:

Thanks for watching out for me. The truth is, "I'm slime and I'm proud!" Having funny digs at industry people is a proud Ultima *tradition. Pirt Snikwah, the pirate leader in* Ultima V Warriors of Destiny, *was a slam at Trip Hawkins, founder of EA and 3DO. Hawkins didn't get upset because he recognized that to be included in any* Ultima, *regardless of whether you are a good guy or a bad guy, is a real honor.*

Of course, I hope this doesn't mean that Lord British has rescinded my place in the Knights of Brittania. The plaque still adorns my wall and I still consider myself a loyal retainer of his lordship—even if my publication must bespeak troubles in the land.

MINESWEEPER MANIAC

I recently started playing the games included with Windows 95, Minesweeper in particular, and wondered if you guys ever play those games. If you do, could you tell me your high scores? Yeah, I know those games are not "surrealistic adventures that will become a part of your world," but still, when I see my brother's time of 71 seconds in intermediate mode, I want to kick him in the nuts.

Tsung-Yen Tsai
via the Internet

Tsung-Yen, go get a job so you can play real games, and leave your brother's nuts alone. Not another word from you, young man.

TROLLING FOR CREDIT

I was once (I'm ashamed to say) a subscriber of that "pseudo" gaming magazine "PC Lamer" but now I've seen the light!! You guys have the best gaming magazine in the world. Keep up the good work.

Troll
via the Internet

Thanks, Dad!

every breath they take
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3Dfx
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PLAYER STATIC

Can these statistics be true (Player Stats, Read.Me, #163)? Both casual and core gamers make more than $60,000 a year? What will these statistics do for the rest us? It's difficult enough supporting a $60-a-month habit, (even more when you throw in the cost of constantly upgrading our equipment and purchasing *Computer Gaming World* every month) but now game publishers and peripheral manufacturers will believe that we're all Mercedes-driving, portfolio-owning, Wall Street fat-cats with money to burn.

As someone who works in the computer industry (for a big-blue company) and barely makes over $30,000 a year, I know that this hobby is expensive. What am I to do? Quit playing? Find a higher-paying job? Maybe a commercial by Sally Struthers: "For the cost of a jelly donut and a cup of coffee a day, you could help Brian play computer games for yet another month…."

FRESH ROADKILL INTERSTATE '76 ARSENAL updates and enhances INTERSTATE '76 with new vehicles, weapons, and missions.

No, I'll just have to bite the bullet and reach even deeper into my wallet. But after seeing the average income of all computer game players being summed up in a sticker-shock inducing statistic, I have visions of the already expensive cost of games going up from $45–$50 a game to $60–$70. Next time, try to keep this type of information under your hats, okay?

Maybe if I just fed the kids peanut-butter sandwiches for the next month, I could buy STARCRAFT. Can any readers lend me a couple of bucks to buy a jar of Skippy?

Brian White
Via the Internet

INTERSTATE MAP

Last summer, I heard about a sequel to INTERSTATE '76 that will be called INTERSTATE '77. It was supposed to be a stand-alone upgrade priced about at the value of an expansion pack. Do you know whatever happened to it?

Dan Upton
Via the Internet

Actually, the full version is included on the original game…oh no, let's not do that again. <g> Activision evidently cancelled their plans for INTERSTATE '77. Instead they're releasing an expanded version of the original game called INTERSTATE '76 ARSENAL PACK. The ARSENAL PACK combines the INTERSTATE '76 GOLD EDITION with the INTERSTATE '76 NITRO PACK. INTERSTATE '76 GOLD EDITION is a revamp of the original game, with Direct 3D support, new difficulty levels, and other improvements. INTERSTATE '76 NITRO PACK is an add-on mission disc with new weapons, cars, and 20 new single-player and 30 new multiplayer missions. All of these games should be available by the time you read this, and if you have the demo disc with this issue you can try out the ARSENAL demo.

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*Access to bungie.net is FREE. Player is responsible for applicable Internet fees.

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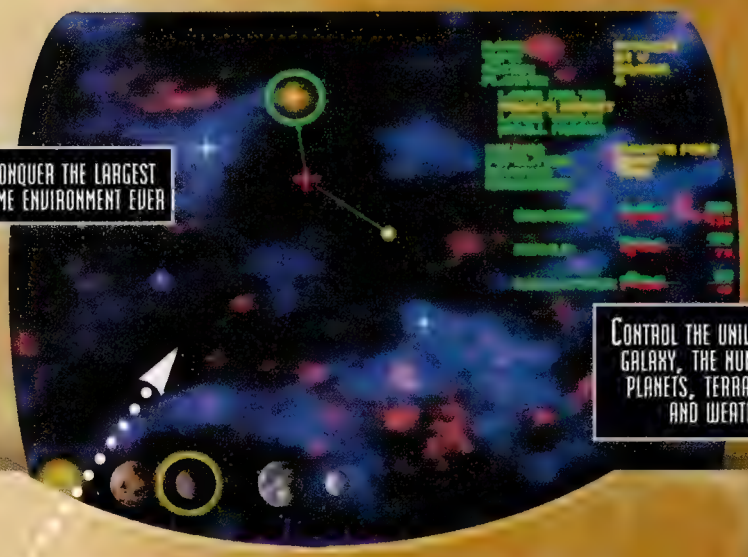

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READ.ME

The Latest News From the Computer Gaming World

Edited by Charlotte Panther (CPanther@zd.com)

Age of Empires II

OPEN THE GATE AND SALLY FORTH: Here you can get idea of the larger building size. The portcullis can b dropped on your enemies' heads.

New Ages Take You From Short-swords to Gunpowder

Conquering kings will soon be able to extend their empires into a whole new era. Design lord Bruce Shelley is leading Ensemble Studios into the Dark Ages and beyond for AGE OF EMPIRES II. Gamers will once again rule one of 12 cultures for a thousand years, this time from the fall of Rome through the Middle Ages. Microsoft has established the trade routes again, and the merchant ships are scheduled to sail this fall.

Ensemble is using the same game engine for AGE II, but the scale has changed. Buildings and trees are now much larger, providing a more realistic setting for the units. Responding to user requests, Ensemble has created gates that can crush any unit. The overall map sizes have been increased: The largest map is 300 percent larger than before and will take eight minutes for a soldier to traverse.

With its larger buildings, the game appears more immersive and realistic, but units can also be "lost" behind walls. Neither Shelley nor the overlords at Microsoft has yet devised a satisfactory means of dealing with this problem. The unit's status bar helps identify its presence, but unselected units are, as yet, invisible behind buildings and walls.

Players will rule one of 12 (possibly 13) cultures, including the Teutonic, Japanese, Byzantine, Viking, Mongol, and Celt civilizations. As in the first game, each civilization will have unique attributes, buildings, and technologies, as well as a particular combat unit based on its historical counterpart. Rulers will guide their civilizations in four new ages: the Dark Age, the Feudal Age, the Castle Age, and the beginnings of the Gunpowder Age.

Ensemble is endeavoring to broaden the game's victory conditions to allow victory through economic and diplomatic means. But of course, we play the game to *crush* our foes, so let's dispense with the economic crap and get to the combat changes.

Players will be able to create military formations, and formation facing will become a factor. AGE II will reportedly have better unit AI, and it will offer four unit AI settings: aggressive, reactive, defensive, and passive. In addition, you'll be able to tell a unit to guard, patrol, scout, or follow another unit. Unit production will be made easier with the advent of unit queues and waypoints.

It's obvious from these changes that Microsoft and Ensemble are trying to implement ambitious design enhancements to what is widely acclaimed as an outstanding real-time strategy game. Whether they preserve the original game's seductive accessibility remains to be seen, but we'll be sure to keep you informed as the game develops. —*"Genghis Khen" Brown*

D.O.J. AT BILL'S GATE These new siege weapons (lower left), called trebuchets, can hurl boulders long distances, but they are immovable.

Microsoft recently unveiled nine other games in development as well as a force-feedback gamepad. We covered some of these games in our March issue (OUTWARS and URBAN ASSAULT in Read.Me), but we'll describe more of them, plus the new controller—and provide more details and screenshots of AGE II—on our Web site at www.computergaming.com.

Quake II Finally Does DeathMatch

The main problem with QUAKE II was that it lacked the multiplayer support (DM levels and co-op play) that made QUAKE such a hit. Well, id has spent the past few months creating eight original DeathMatch levels and reintroducing co-op play for QUAKE II. These levels are available for free from id's Web site at **www.idsoftware.com**. You can get them via patch 3.12. All retail copies of QUAKE II will now also include the new DM levels and co-op play. *—Elliott "Gunboy" Chin*

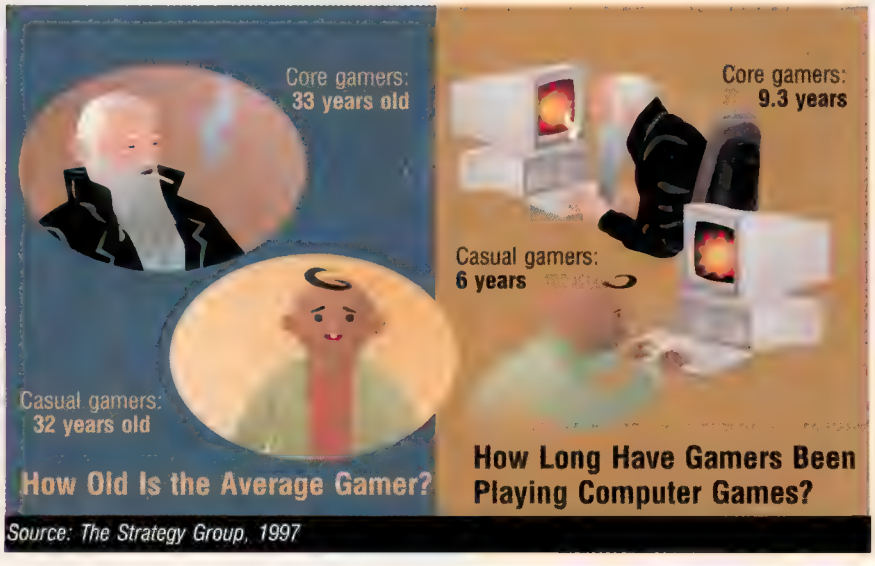
Oh My God! They Killed Kenny!

So, you're the ultimate QUAKE-head, and you think you've seen it all when it comes to DeathMatching. But are you ready for a free-for-all gorefest between Gene Simmons of Kiss, Kenny from *Southpark*, and Astroboy? This dream matchup is now possible with some new QUAKE II skins, downloadable from PlanetQuake's Q2Pmp (player models pack) Web site, at **www.planetquake. com/q2pmp/**.

QUAKE II skins are fully animated, user-created character models that you can use in addition to the standard male and female characters. There are many models (of varying quality) available on the Web, and the PlanetQuake site reviews many of them with star ratings, so you can sort the good from the bad before you download them.

To use a skin, download the zip file to your hard drive, then copy the unzipped character folder into your QUAKE II player folder (for example, C:/Quake2/baseq2/players/Kenny). When you start QUAKE II, go to the Multiplayer Player Setup screen and toggle through the models until you find your new character skin. Note that all players must have the skin installed on their computers in order to see it. The skin will not affect your gameplay, but it definitely adds some spice to a DeathMatch. So what are you waiting for? Download some skins and kill Kenny yourself. Believe me, it feels great! *—Joe "The Lurking One" Vallina*

Player Stats



GRAPHIC BY XPLANE

News Flash

After months of speculation, **Electronic Arts** officially announced that it has signed a worldwide license for the interactive entertainment rights

to golfer Tiger Woods. EA will release its first Tiger Woods game for both the PC and the PlayStation this summer. Financial terms of the four-year agreement were not disclosed.

History was virtually rewritten recently when Northern general John Busterna (a.k.a. Viejo) surrendered to Confederate general Duane S. Russell, ending **Sierra**'s CIVIL WAR GENERALS 2 online reenactment of the Civil War. Viejo and Russell will meet face to face when they get their grand prize: a trip to an actual Civil War reenactment in Charleston, South Carolina

Online gaming service **Mplayer** recently closed a deal with **Epic MegaGames** to bring the company's upcoming 3D shooter, UNREAL, to Mplayer's Action Channel. UNREAL is slated for a late spring 1998 ship date. In related news, **ION Storm** recently announced that it has licensed the UNREAL game engine for designer Warren Spector's upcoming 3D role-playing espionage game, SHOOTER.

Flying Nightmares 2 on Hold

Team Reassigned to Confirmed Kill

Just prior to press time, Eidos announced that it has indefinitely postponed Flying Nightmares 2, and that the members of the team have been reassigned to other products.

According to Producer Brian Walker, the project was experiencing delays—primarily the result of a "problem child" programmer on the team. Walker's efforts to have this person replaced or to bring another person in to supplement him were vetoed by two Eidos executives. Eventually Walker was able to bring Gary Stottlemeyer (Falcon 3.0, Red Baron II) onto the team. After looking at the current state of the AI code, Stottlemeyer said he would need at least six months to set up a feature-complete executable, pushing the product to a probable Christmas 1998 release. Faced with this development, Walker says Eidos execs chose to suspend the product. In the meantime, Walker received a job offer from Origin/Jane's Combat Simulations and, given his recent experiences with executive roadblocks, decided to accept. Walker stresses that his decision to leave Eidos was not based on any lack of faith in FN2 or the team.

In fact, FN2 may not be completely written off. According to Eidos spokesman Gary Keith, the project has been suspended—not killed—while the company evaluates how to complete it.

The shelving of Flying Nightmares 2 did give a boost to another Eidos project, the WWII sim Confirmed Kill. The remaining members of the FN2 team are now working on Confirmed Kill, and the increased manpower should finally get that long-delayed project out the door.

Confirmed Kill, slated to begin a closed-beta test on TEN at the end of March, will feature Russian, European, Pacific, and African combat theaters. The initial release will let players stage online combat set in the battles of Midway, Kursk, and Britain. New battles (and appropriate aircraft) will be released every month or two. The first release will feature all human players, but the sim's modular design will allow AI aircraft to be added in future revisions.

In other Eidos simulations news, the company has ended its relationship with developer Simis, so the Team Apache helicopter sim is currently being shopped to other publishers. *—Denny Atkin*

Confirmed Kill (above) is reaping rewards from FN2's death.

Also in the Works at Eidos . . .

A recent trip to Eidos revealed that the company has some other interesting products brewing. Its major title for Christmas 1998 will be Omakron, a 3D action/adventure game in which you find yourself battling demons out to collect souls. Should you be killed, your soul will inhabit the body nearest to you when you die. You'll thus be reincarnated into one of 15 characters, including old men, old women, and even cats and dogs. While the adventure-game-style dialogue choices help define your different paths through the game, there are certain missions you must complete to succeed.

Also in the works is Commandos, a real-time multiplayer wargame, which—unlike Eidos' upcoming RTS game, Dominion—takes an approach that's completely opposite from the traditional "harvest, build, and attack" real-time model. The game takes place during the height of World War II. You control a small team of commandos and conduct various surgical strikes and special missions for the Allies. The scenarios are very mission-based, with specific goals and objectives. The covert missions you'll conduct include rescuing prisoners, destroying weapons plants, and infiltrating enemy buildings. Each member of your team will have special skills, and each mission will require deft use of each member's skills.

Finally, if you're wondering what became of Unfinished Business—the Tomb Raider add-on pack that we mentioned a while back—it's now available as part of Tomb Raider Gold. The set includes four new levels along with a complete copy of the original Tomb Raider. Tomb Raider Gold is available for $29.99. To find out more about these games, head to www.computergaming.com. ***—Charlotte Panther and Elliott Chin***

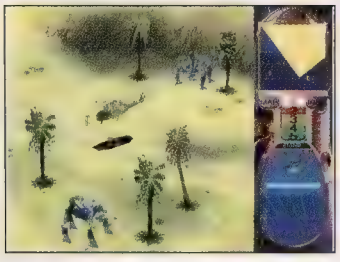
Omakron

Commandos

In the Works

MGM Interactive Creates a 3D Sequel to the Movie WarGames

Myth was only the beginning of a trend in 3D strategy gaming. Hot on its heels will be WarGames, MGM Interactive's true 3D real-time strategy game. The game is based on the popular '80s movie that starred Matthew Broderick as a young hacker genius who takes on the misguided supercomputer WOPR.



WarGames has 3D terrain *and* 3D units. It is set in the near future and assumes that the threat from WOPR has not been completely eliminated. In the film, WOPR took over the U.S. military's nuclear missiles and threatened to start WWIII before Broderick's character stopped it. In the game, WWIII has already begun, and NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command) forces are now battling WOPR's robotic legions.

You can play as either side, NORAD or WOPR, and each side has roughly analogous units (light infantry units, for example, versus light combat drones). As NORAD, you'll command modern armor and infantry; as WOPR, you'll command hovering drones, robots, and Mechlike walkers.

By virtue of the 3D terrain, WarGames will take advantage of line-of-sight, elevation, and terrain effects. In addition, there will be various environments and climates, such as snowy alpine areas, that will affect and be affected by units (vehicles leave tracks in the snow, for example). The 3D graphics also allow the game to offer a fully rotatable camera, much like the one in Myth. You can also zoom in and out, although there are only two levels of zoom at this stage of development.

Although I wasn't able to see all the missions, or even test out the hackers for gathering money and intelligence from enemy computers, WarGames still looks promising. Its 3D isn't as sophisticated as Myth's, but WarGames is still only in beta stage. It should be optimized as it gets closer to MGM Interactive's Q2 1998 release date. —*Elliott Chin*

PLAYING LATELY

CGW Survey*

	Last Month	Months on Chart
1. Diablo (Blizzard/CUC)	3	12
2. Jedi Knight (LucasArts)	2	2
3. Quake (id Software)	5	16
4. Total Annihilation (GT Interactive)	4	2
5. Civilization II (MicroProse)	1	23
6. Fallout (Interplay)	6	2
7. Panzer General II (SSI)	-	1
8. Red Alert (Westwood/Virgin)	8	13
9. Heroes II: POL (New World Computing)	-	6
10. Duke Nukem 3D (3D Realms/GT Interactive)	7	23
10. Ultima Online (Origin/EA)	-	1

** Check your mailbox: We mail a survey to 1,500 randomly-chosen subscribers each month. The results of Playing Lately indicate what games readers are blowing the most time on, as opposed to the reader's overall "quality ranking" in the Top 100.*

PC Data Best-Sellers**

	Last Month
1. Deer Hunter (GT Interactive)	9
2. Myst (Red Orb)	4
3. Flight Simulator 98 (Microsoft)	5
4. Riven: The Sequel to Myst (Red Orb)	1
5. Quake II (id/Activision)	2
6. Tomb Raider II (Eidos)	8
7. Frogger (Hasbro Interactive)	7
8. Monopoly (Westwood/Hasbro Interactive)	-
9. Age of Empires (Microsoft)	-
10. Lego Island (Mindscape)	6

*** This list indicates what the top-selling PC games were, as calculated by PC Data, during January, 1998*

THIS JUST IN

Short takes on games and hardware released just prior to press time.

FRONT PAGE SPORTS SKI RACING

FPS Ski Racing does a good job of moving this sport forward for PC gamers. Ski Racing has a good-looking accelerated 3D-engine (provided you've got a 3Dfx-based card) and features six courses: Aspen, Vail, Mt. Bachelor, Whistler, Val d'Isere, and Garmisch. Force-feedback controller support allows you to feel the bumps and jumps on your way down the slope. Events include Downhill, Slalom, Giant Slalom, and Super G. The courses make it very challenging to stay on track, and through all of them, control seemed to be a problem. Nonetheless, if you're a hard-core ski buff, or a hard-core wannabe, Ski Racing is worth a look. —*Dave Salvator*

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PC CD-ROM

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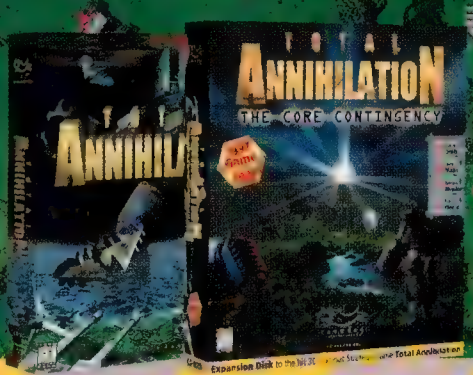

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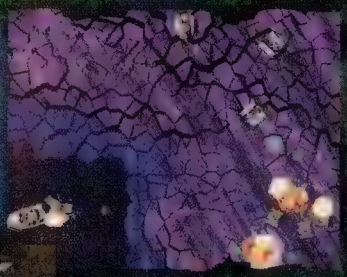
–Gaming Review

"Takes you where no real-time game has gone before"
–Computer Gaming World

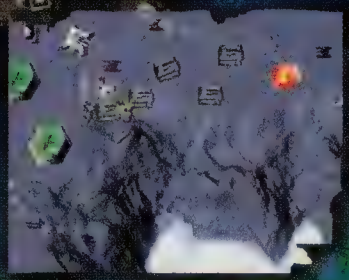
"Total Annihilation leads the way"
–Computer Gaming World

"You will love this game"
–PC Games

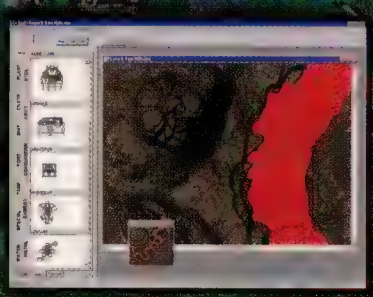


More Maps

More Missions



More Worlds



Bonus Map & Mission Editor

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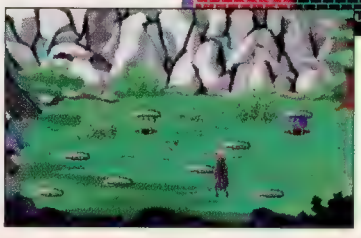
Role-Playing Orgy: Four New Collections Offer a Virtual History of RPGs

Capitalizing on the resurgence of role-playing games (thanks to 1997's awesome FALLOUT and DIABLO), Interplay, Origin, and Sierra have just released a series of RPG collections that offer a sweeping overview of computer role-playing games on just a few CDs.

Leading the charge is Interplay, which, with FALLOUT and the upcoming BALDUR'S GATE, is demonstrating a real commitment to the genre (despite the disastrous DESCENT TO UNDERMOUNTAIN, which should never have been released). Now the company is offering 24 classic role-playing games in two massive collections.

The ULTIMATE RPG COLLECTION brings together some of the best role-playing games ever made: THE BARD'S TALE I–III and CONSTRUCTION SET, MIGHT & MAGIC: WORLD OF XEEN, ULTIMA UNDERWORLD I & II, DRAGON WARS, WASTELAND, and WIZARDRY GOLD. The collection includes all the original manuals bundled in one giant book (suitable for bench-pressing). The only bummers in this otherwise must-have collection are the lack of some of the original game maps and the horrid oversight in omitting the BARD'S TALE II and III copy-protection code wheels. You'll need to download these from Interplay's Web site (**www.interplay.com**) to get the games to run.

Ultima IV


Quest for Glory I

In advance of BALDUR'S GATE, an *AD&D* game set in the *Forgotten Realms* world, Interplay has also released the FORGOTTEN REALMS COLLECTION, which bundles the entire set of 12 *Forgotten Realms* RPGs released over the past decade, including: POOL OF RADIANCE, CURSE OF THE AZURE BONDS, HILLSFAR, SECRET OF THE SILVER BLADES, POOLS OF DARKNESS, EYE OF THE BEHOLDER I–III, DUNGEON HACK, GATEWAY TO THE SAVAGE FRONTIER, TREASURES OF THE SAVAGE FRONTIER, and MENZOBERRANZAN.

Origin, now gearing up for ULTIMA IX, has just released the ULTIMA COLLECTION, which packs every game of this popular series (except the UNDERWORLD games) on one CD. As a bonus, Origin includes AKALABETH, Richard Garriott's first game, which he designed at age 19 and which he acknowledges as the catalyst for his ULTIMA universe. Also included are all the original maps, interviews with Garriott, and a short preview of ULTIMA IX. It's another can't-miss purchase.

Finally, Sierra, in anticipation of QUEST FOR GLORY V, recently released the QUEST FOR GLORY collection, which bundles the four previous games in Lori Cole's wonderful adventure/RPG series. For those who want something a little less hard-core than the above collections, or for adventure gamers who have never taken the plunge into RPGs, this is the perfect place to start. *—Jeff Green*

THIS JUST IN

TEX MURPHY: OVERSEER

The newest TEX MURPHY game is actually one big flashback, showing us the story behind the intrepid detective's very first case. Access has completely overhauled the interface, replacing the cluttered control-panel look of the earlier games with a cleaner, user-friendlier letterboxed interface. The gameplay remains the same: You wonder through a virtual world solving puzzles and talking to various people. OVERSEER comes on five CDs and one DVD, and apparently there's enough difference between the two to warrant replay. All in all, this is another must-have for fans of the series, marred only by the high system demands. *--Thierry Nguyen*

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News Flash

Psygnosis is upping its presence in the simulations market with two new titles: WINGS OF DESTINY and PANZER ELITE. Both titles will feature detailed dynamic campaign structures, comprehensive battle-planning systems, and actual WWII battle scenarios. WINGS OF DESTINY combines highly accurate flight-models with realistic air-combat. A fictitious war story—told via a comic-book interface—develops through gameplay, as players choose to side with either Axis or Allies in four campaigns with 50 historical missions. WINGS will offer four types of aircraft to fly and up to 20 nonplayer aircraft to dogfight.

PANZER ELITE simulates the combat environment of tanks in a WWII setting, featuring battles waged between German and American forces. Players can choose to play either side, and all scenarios are based upon actual tank battles waged between 1942 and 1944. At press time, playable code for either of these products was not yet available, but stay tuned for a hands-on report.

SquareSoft has informed us that it has decided to can the PC port for FINAL FANTASY VI (No. 3 in the series for the original SNES American release). SquareSoft had initially planned to make FINAL FANTASY V–VII available for the PC but decided that since FFVI was already available on the SNES, it would omit that episode and devote more time to the other titles.

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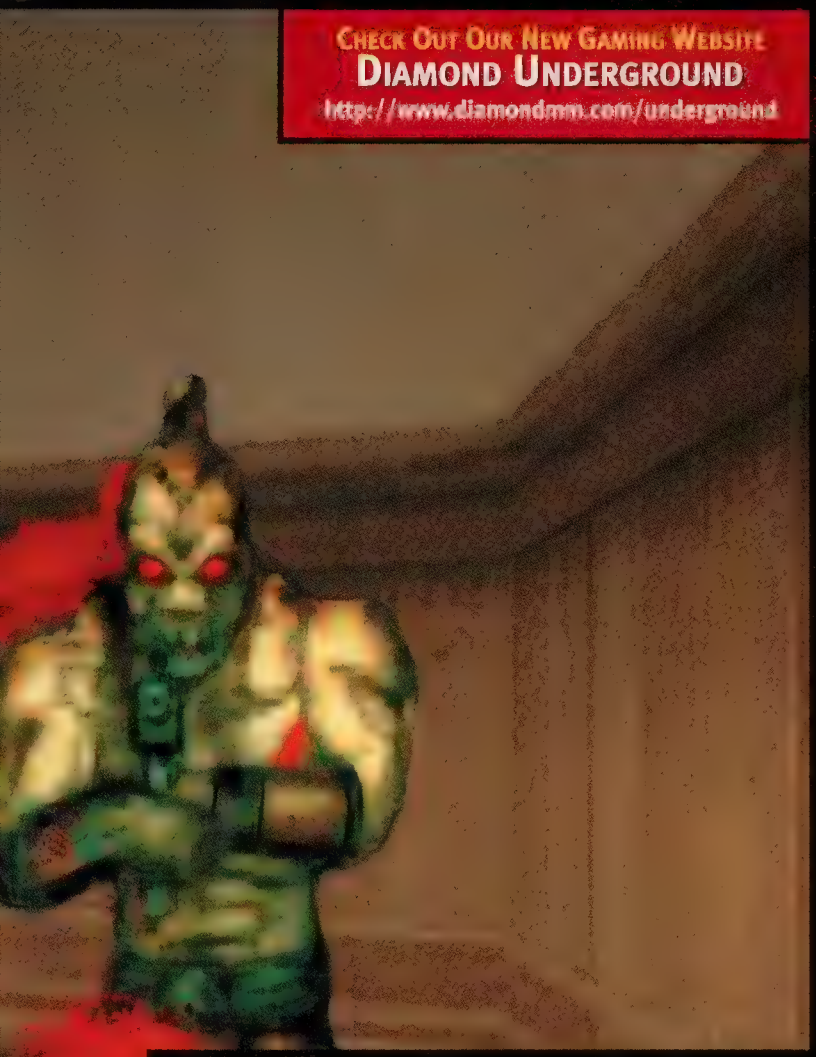

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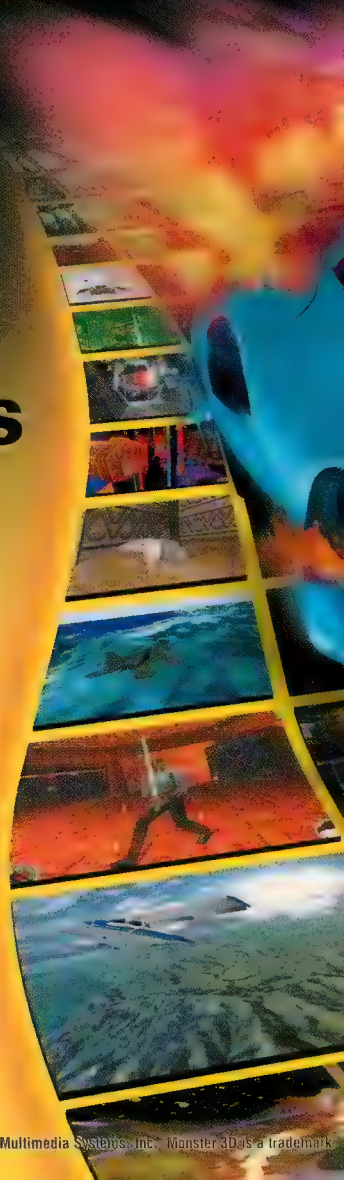

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News Flash

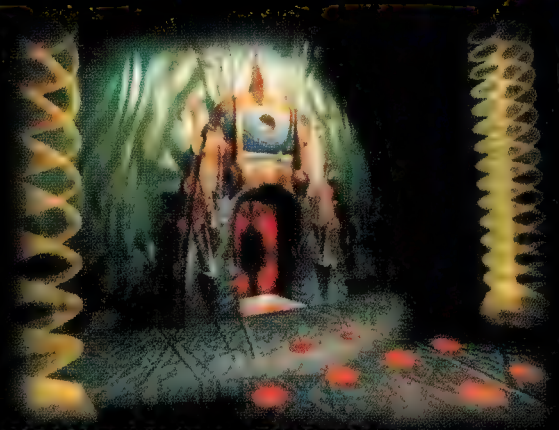
CGW's very own editor-in-chief, Johnny Wilson, was the sole U.S. representative on the first "Games Jury" at Europe's recent **Milia D'Or** awards. After much deliberation, the team of international judges—chaired by Peter Molyneux, founder of **Bullfrog Games** and **LionHead Studios**—honored the following titles with genre-based awards: Final Fantasy VII (Adventure/RPG), NHL Hockey '98 (Sports), Quake II (Online), G-Police (Action), F-22 Air Dominance Fighter (Sim), and Dungeon Keeper (Strategy). Molyneux, the creator of Dungeon Keeper, was asked to leave the room while the Strategy discussions took place. F-22 Air Dominance Fighter won Game of the Year for bringing more depth, innovation, and technical excellence to its genre than did any other product.

Hasbro Interactive has entered into an agreement with **Smart Games, Inc.** to license and publish its line of mind-bending brainteasers, including Smart Games Challenge #1 and Challenge #2, in addition to future titles under the Smart Games brand.

In related news, Hasbro is teaming up with **DreamWorks Interactive** to develop a CD-ROM title based on DreamWorks' upcoming action-adventure movie *Small Soldiers*. Hasbro's game will allow kids to design and customize their own action-figures based upon characters from the movie. DreamWorks Interactive is also developing an action-strategy game for kids based on the film.

Adventure Time

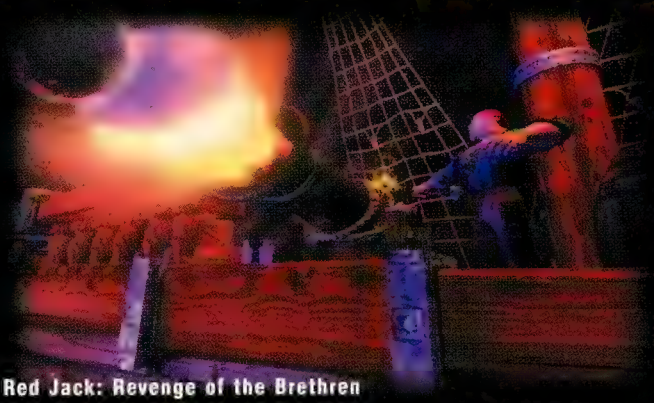
Adventure Gaming Continues Its Renaissance With Three Grand New Titles



Of Light and Darkness—The Prophecy

After a long slump, adventure gaming has come back swinging, thanks to the recent release of a number of quality titles, including The Curse of Monkey Island, Blade Runner, Zork Grand Inquisitor, and Tex Murphy: Overseer. Following on the heels of those high-profile titles are a few adventure games with much less hype that, nevertheless, may be worth watching for.

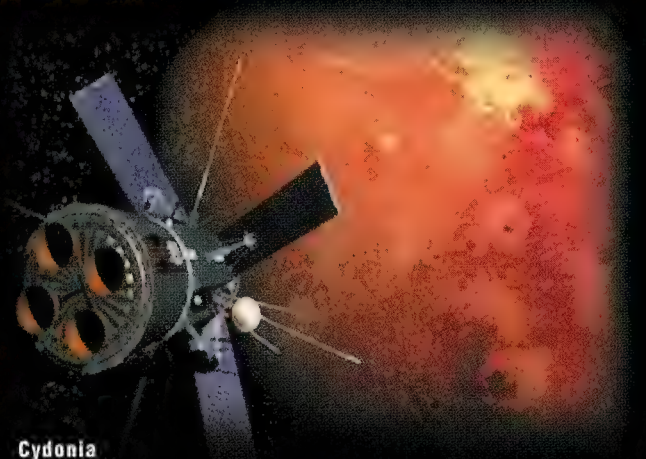
One very promising title is Of Light and Darkness—The Prophecy, an adventure game from Interplay's Tribal Dreams division, which is also developing the upcoming Star Trek: Secret of Vulcan Fury (see this month's cover story). Of Light and Darkness is a surreal, 3D adventure centered on that always-uplifting topic: the end of the world. Set in a fantasy world, with beautiful, original graphics, the game will be a time-based race to save humanity, with 10 possible endings ranging from apocalypse to paradise. This bizarre game left us scratching our heads when we first saw it a year ago, but a recent look showed it to be shaping up in grand fashion, with more focused and understandable gameplay. Look for it as a possible sleeper hit in 1998.



Red Jack: Revenge of the Brethren

Also due this year is Red Jack: Revenge of the Brethren, the latest adventure game from CyberFlix, the folks behind Dust and Titanic: Adventure Out of Time. The game mixes combat with traditional puzzle-solving, as you attempt to solve a series of brutal murders. And while it's a pirate story, it promises to be a much darker, more realistic tale than LucasArts' comic Monkey Island series. The game will feature completely 3D-rendered characters, with a 360-degree panning camera and much more sophisticated character animation than that of Titanic or Dust. The technology, coupled with Cyberflix's always-strong storytelling skills, makes Red Jack an intriguing entry.

Finally, we took a look at Cydonia, a cool-looking science-fiction adventure developed by Aneiva and published by DreamCatcher Interactive. This four-CD game sends you crash-landing on Mars, where you must learn the language and culture of an ancient Martian civilization in order to escape. The most notable feature is that the Martian landscapes in the game look completely realistic. And why not—they were based on data culled from NASA. Multiple endings, voice-acting by members of the Ashland (Oregon) Shakespeare Festival, and an unabashedly hard-core sci-fi bent make this the strongest-looking sci-fi adventure in years. Watch for it this spring. —*Jeff Green*



Cydonia

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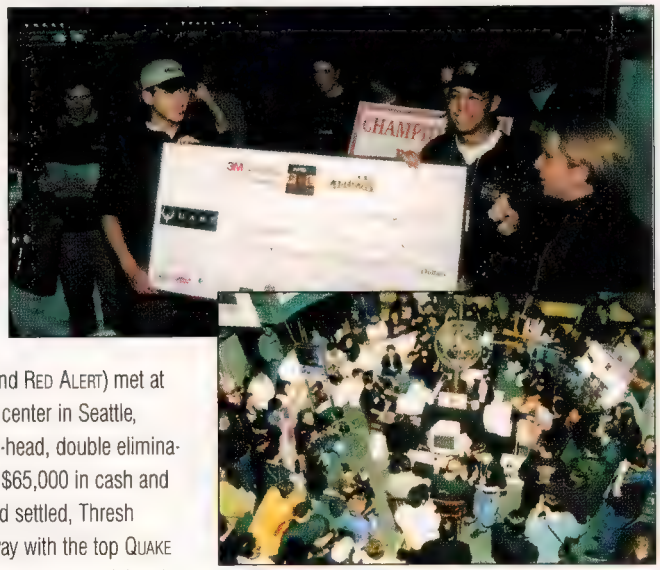
PGL Wraps Up Its First Season

The inaugural season of the AMD Professional Gamers' League concluded with a two-day tournament in which those favored to win did not disappoint and many of those fortunate enough to watch realized that competitive gaming *could* actually be compelling. The top 16 gamers of the PGL (eight players each for QUAKE and RED ALERT) met at the GameWorks entertainment center in Seattle, where they battled in a head-to-head, double elimination tournament for more than $65,000 in cash and prizes. After the virtual dust had settled, Thresh (a.k.a. Dennis Fong) walked away with the top QUAKE honors and DeepBlue (a.k.a. David Margo) claimed the RED ALERT title.



Above: Thresh walked away with the QUAKE championship title, an AMD K6 gaming rig, and a check for $7,500.
Below: The crowds gathered as competitors prepared to do battle in the QUAKE DeathMatch semifinals.

While Thresh's triumph was no surprise to anyone who has witnessed his amazing QUAKE skills—he's the guy who won John Carmack's Ferrari last year at the Red Annihilation Tournament—he did not survive the event with his undefeated record intact. On the second day, Thresh suffered his first professional loss to Reptile (a.k.a. Jim Dangcil). He then fought his way up through the loser's bracket to reach the championship match; there he beat Reptile twice before claiming first place. DeepBlue, on the other hand, swept easily through the RED ALERT tournament, defeating SoLjA (a.k.a. Cuong Tran) in the final match.

As a spectator event, QUAKE, with its fast-paced action and easy-to-follow scoring, proved the more appealing of the two games. (It helped that the QUAKE matches—complete with play-by-play announcing—were broadcast on large monitors throughout GameWorks.)

The PGL plans to hold three more seasons this year, introducing different games and new categories each season. The second season is currently under way, with tournaments in QUAKE II, TOTAL ANNIHILATION, and a team version of QUAKE. The finals are slated to take place at E3 at the end of May. *—Rebecca B. Anderson*

PIPELINE

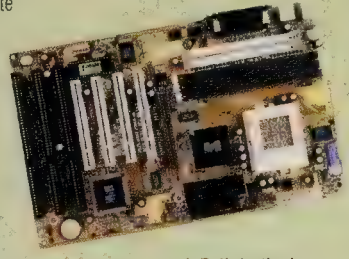
Abyss: Incident at Europa Sound Source	Q3 98
Aces: X-Fighters Sierra	Q4 98
Age of Empires II Ensemble/Microsoft	Q4 98
Asheron's Call Turbine/Microsoft	Q4 98
Axis & Allies Hasbro	Q3 98
Battle of Britain 1940	Q3 98
Battlewagons SSI	Q3 98
Birth of the Federation	Q3 98
Blackstone Chronicles SSI	Q4 98
Creatures II Mindscape	Q1 98
Descent Freespace Interplay	Q2 98
Duke Nukem Forever	Q4 98
Earthworm Jim 3 Interplay	Q2 98
Extreme Warfare	Q1 98
European Air War MicroProse	Q2 98
Falcon 4.0 MicroProse	Q2 98
Flanker 2.0 SSI	Q3 98
Freedom in the Galaxy	Q3 98
Galactic Mirage Virgin	Q2 98
Game, Net & Match	Q2 98
Grand Prix Legends Papyrus	Q2 98
Great Battles of Julius Caesar	Q2 98
Guadalcanal Avalon Hill	Q3 98
IF/A-18 Interactive Magic	Q2 98
IA-18 Warthog Interactive Magic	Q3 98
I-War Ocean	Q2 98
Jagged Alliance II Sir Tech	Q2 98
Jane's F-15 Jane's/EA	Q2 98
King's Quest: Mask of Eternity Sierra	Q4 98
Klingon Honor Guard MicroProse	Q4 98
Masterminds Hasbro	Q3 98
MechWarrior III MicroProse/FASA	Q4 98
MIG Alley Empire	Q2 98
Might & Magic VI New World Computing	Q2 98
NHL Power Play 98 Virgin	Q3 98
Operational Art of War	Q2 98
Panzer Commander SSI	Q2 98
People's General SSI	Q3 98
Phantom Ace Virgin	Q3 98
Prey Apogee/3D Realms	Q2 99
Quest For Glory V Sierra	Q2 98
Rally Championship Virgin	Q2 98
Reach for the Stars II Microsoft/SSG	Q2 98
Redguard Bethesda	Q2 98
Redline Accolade	Q2 98
Return Fire 2 MGM	Q3 98
Return to Krondor Sierra	Q4 98
Revolution Feeny Wolf/Cryo	Q3 98
Screamer 2 Virgin	Q3 98
Screamin' Demons Activision	Q1 98
Skies SegaSoft	Q2 98
Sanitarium Asc Games/DreamForge	Q2 98
Secret of Vulcan Fury Interplay	Q3 98
Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri Firaxis/EA	Q2 98
SimCity 3000 Maxis	Q2 98
Sin Activision	Q2 98
Squad Leader Big Time/Avalon Hill	Q4 98
Star Control 4 Accolade	Q4 98
Star Trek: First Contact MicroProse	Q3 98
Tomorrow Never Dies MGM	Q4 98
Trespasser: Jurassic Park DreamWorks	Q2 98
Ubik Cryo	Q2 98
Ultima IX Origin/EA	Q4 98
Ultimate Civ II MicroProse	Q2 98
Unreal Epic/GT Interactive	Q3 98
VR Baseball '98 Interplay	Q2 98
VR Powerboat Racing Interplay	Q2 98
Warhammer 40K: Chaos Gate SSI	Q2 98
Whistling Death Big Time/Avalon Hill	Q3 98
X-Files Adventure Game Fox Interactive	Q3 98

THIS JUST IN

GIGA-BYTE GA-586SG MOTHERBOARD

CGW GOLD

With all the hoopla surrounding AGP graphics, some users of Pentium, K6, and Cyrix CPUs probably feel left out. Giga-Byte has tried to find a solution: a Socket 7 motherboard with AGP. In theory, 3D benchmarks and games with large textures should run faster on AGP than on PCI. That's not necessarily so. We compared the performance of the 586SG using the AGP version of the STB Velocity 128 to an ASUS TX97-XE running the PCI version of the same graphics card. Both testbeds had a 233MHz Intel Pentium with MMX and 64MB of EDO DRAM.



The SIS-equipped 586SG benchmarked slower all around than the PCI-only ASUS board. In fact, *everything* seemed slower, including most of the games we ran. Giga-Byte makes some very nice boards—particularly its GA686-LX Pentium II AGP board—but this isn't one of them. *—Loyd Case*

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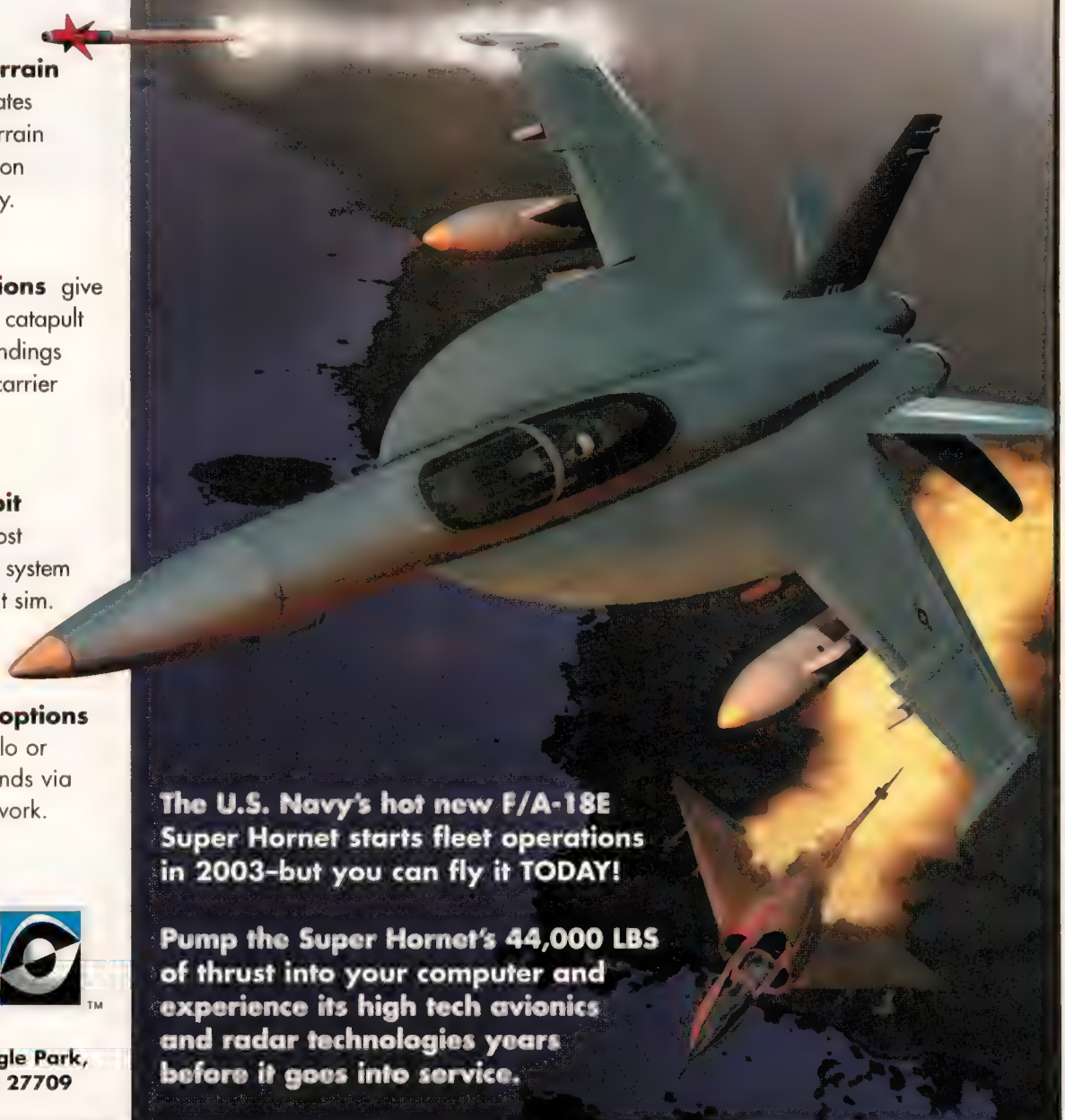

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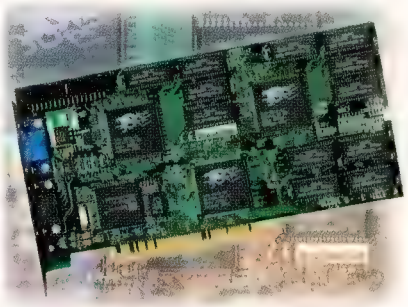
Voodoo² Hits the Streets

If you've been following the evolution of 3D graphics, then you've no doubt heard about 3Dfx's Voodoo² chipset, and the new boards that will use it. Three vendors, Creative Labs, Diamond Multimedia, and Jazz Multimedia have all announced Voodoo²–based parts, but as of this writing, only Creative is actually shipping a product. We received it too late to review in this issue, but this article will tell you what we've found so far. We also received Diamond's Monster3D II with early beta drivers, and quickly put it through some paces.

The arrival of Voodoo² is a much-awaited event, but the online belching contest that's gone on between Creative and Diamond has made for some added fireworks. Creative decided to use a Voodoo² reference board layout, as well as 3Dfx's reference drivers. By going this route, it was first to market, beating rival Diamond to the punch. For its part, Diamond has been casting aspersions on Creative's offering, stating that by waiting a little longer, and taking the time to tweak its drivers, Diamond will deliver the superior product...after Creative has delivered its product. Both are offering 8MB (4MB frame-buffer, 2MB per texel engine) and 12MB (4MB frame-buffer, 4MB per texel engine), and both have provisions for harnessing two Voodoo² boards using 3Dfx's Scan-Line Interleave (SLI) technology, which supposedly doubles performance. So who's got the real deal, and who's going to play second fiddle? At this point, we can't really say, because Diamond doesn't yet have shipping drivers. But here's what we've seen so far.

Creative's board

Creative's 3D Blaster Voodoo² began shipping at deadline time, and we took a look at how it fared against the current competition: original Voodoo, RIVA 128, Rendition V2200, and Intel's i740. For the full story on how all of these fare, tune into next month's 3D graphics supplement. We tested Creative's Voodoo² part on a Pentium-II 333MHz system, admittedly an extremely fast box, but we wanted to see how Voodoo² would work with the fastest CPU we could get our hands on. The results are pretty surprising. Despite performing very well on 3D WinBench 98 (coming in at 726), this 3D Blaster's framerates in Turok, G-Police, Jedi Knight and Flight Simulator '98 were about the same as, or slower than, Voodoo-based boards, as well as boards using nVidia's RIVA 128 and Intel's i740. My impression is that in its haste to ship, Creative sent a stable, but relatively untuned Direct3D driver out the door. Looking at Quake II though, the 3D Blaster Voodoo² blew away all comers with a whopping 71.6fps running at 640x480.


Diamond's board

Diamond's beta part, as one might expect, turned in slightly slower numbers, but its Direct3D game frame rates were for the most part nipping at Creative's heels. On Quake II however, Creative enjoyed about a 10fps edge. Remember, though, Diamond still isn't shipping yet, so this isn't much of a comparison.

With Voodoo², 3Dfx has hurled themselves toward the front of the performance curve yet again. How long they stay there is another question. But Voodoo², even with its not-quite-baked Direct3D drivers, still promises to be a solid performer. *—Dave Salvator*

THIS JUST IN

DEADLOCK II: SHRINE WARS

I actually liked the original Deadlock, even though it turned out to be lacking in the depth and AI departments. Deadlock II, released with little fanfare by Accolade, attempts to fix those problems, but I can't play enough of the game to find out if it succeeds. The interface is too confusing. The gameplay is similar to the original, so I knew what to do, but the problem was, I didn't know *how* to do it. Accolade has made the interface more jumbled and complicated. There could be more to this game than meets the eye, but from first impressions, the interface is bad and the gameplay not enough of a jump over the original. *—Elliott Chin*

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DEMONSTAR

Ever since the advent of Space Invaders, there has been a slew of arcade games with the same theme. Essentially, Demonstar is more of the same. Unlike the classic coin-op, however, this game lets you move over the entire screen. By the same token, the aliens don't just stop at the bottom of the screen, but hang around and shoot from all angles. Power-ups change your weapon and shield capabilities; aliens get trickier as the levels progress. The only reason to play Demonstar is the better graphics. Even so, this is just old wine in a new bottle. *—Matthew Schaefer*

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ARMORED MOON

Armored Moon delivers a C&C-style game, in which players must challenge G7, "the world's largest multinational enterprise," for dominance of the moon and access to its resources. Unfortunately, the game's uninspired graphics and skimpy manual doom it. Excitement over this one is about as cold as the moon's atmosphere itself. *—Tahsin Shamma*

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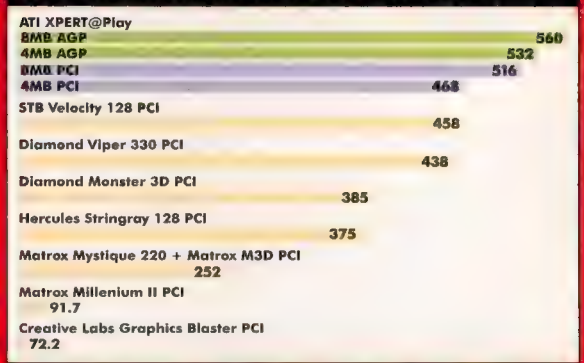

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Dead Man Walking

LucasArts' GRIM FANDANGO Takes Adventure Gaming to a New Dimension

by Jeff Green

How do you follow up one of the greatest adventure games of the past 10 years? That's the challenge facing LucasArts in the wake of CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND, last year's comic masterpiece that walked away with every adventure-gaming award from virtually every major gaming publication, including this one. Well, the answer is GRIM FANDANGO—a stunning game now in development, which promises to take LucasArts adventures into a whole new dimension (the third), while still providing fans the trademark laughs and puzzle-solving thrills we've come to expect.

At the helm of GRIM FANDANGO is veteran LucasArts developer Tim Schafer, whose previous works include the classic DAY OF THE TENTACLE and FULL THROTTLE. Those familiar with these titles, however, should drop all preconceptions and expectations. GRIM FANDANGO is going to look, feel, and play differently than any other adventure game you've ever experienced. You want one example? How about a cast of characters composed entirely of the dead.

DARKER FORCES

GRIM FANDANGO, as first reported back in our November 1997 issue, is a crime story that mixes elements of film noir with traditional Mexican folklore. The result is a game that is both darker and more surreal than any previous LucasArts effort.

The game takes place in the Land of the Dead—the first stop, according to Mexican folklore, of a soul when a person dies. Upon arrival, each soul must embark on a four-year journey across the Land of the Dead before coming to its final resting place. Just how difficult this journey is depends on the kind of life one has lived. For Schafer, this presented an ideal set-up for an adventure game, in which the struggle to get out of the Land of the Dead might lead a soul to commit a dangerous, desperate act.

The game's main character is Manny Calavera ("calavera" is Spanish for "skull"), a hapless skeleton in the Land of the Dead, who is stuck with the job of travel agent for the Department of Death. Every morning, Manny must don his Grim Reaper outfit (kept in a closet in his office), escort his newly deceased clients to the Land of the Dead, and set them on their four-year trek.

Manny's job also requires him to sell, to those who qualify, a

BEFORE AND AFTER The GRIM FANDANGO design team is storyboarding virtually the entire game. At right we see artist Peter Chan's concept art. The completely rendered result is shown above.

DON'T FEAR THE REAPER Meet Manny Calavera, travel agent for the Department of Death—known as the Grim Reaper to you. Don't be scared though, Manny has big problems of his own.

more efficient way—such as by rental car, boat, or train—of getting across the Land. The only way Manny himself will ever move on to his eternal rest is if he meets a certain sales quota. The trouble is, his good leads have all dried up, so, in a nod to David Mamet's modern noir drama *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Manny decides to steal a lead. And this is where his problems begin.

GRIM FANDANGO plays out as a four-act drama over the course of four years (paralleling the four-year journey of the soul). Manny's act leads him on a dangerous collision course with the game's bad guy, Hector LeMans, who wants the stolen lead back. Manny also interacts with femme fatale Mercedes Colomar and a large orange demon by the name of Glottis, who becomes Manny's pal and confidante.

The four-year timetable gives Schafer the canvas on which to really develop the characters' relationships, with fortunes and friendships rising and falling as the story progresses. The deeper story can be visibly seen in the phone-book–size script in Schafer's LucasArts office in Marin County. Schafer estimates the script to be about 7,000 lines of dialogue, compared to the roughly 2,300 lines of dialogue for FULL THROTTLE.

LIVING DEAD

The film noir and Mexican folklore influences drive more than just the plot. They serve as the basis behind GRIM FANDANGO's boldly original look, which combines prerendered 2D backgrounds with 3D polygonal characters.

The ominous, brilliantly detailed background art, architecture, and lighting—designed by artist Peter Chan, also

Genre: Adventure • **ETA:** Q3 1998
Developer: LucasArts
Publisher: LucasArts

TIM'S DEAD GAME

Walking in to Tim Schafer's office at LucasArts, one can see just how much GRIM FANDANGO has taken over his life. Scattered all around his office—along with a KISS Army painting, PaRappa the Rappa alarm clock, and *Welcome Back Kotter* lunch box—is a giant collection of Mexican Day of the Dead art, as well as the complete scripts of noir classics like *Double Indemnity* and the '70s noir homage *Chinatown*.

We took a chunk of time out of Tim's busy schedule to ask him a few questions about GRIM FANDANGO.

CGW: Where did the inspiration for the game come from?
Schafer: I'd been interested in the Mexican Day of the Dead ever since I took a folklore class at Berkeley. It's a really interesting holiday: The dead come back to the land of the living for one day to celebrate with loved ones. A story set in the land of the dead seemed like perfect adventure-game material to me.

CGW: Where did the title come from?
Schafer: Well, that's what the Day of the Dead is. A bittersweet celebration of death as a part of life. A morbid, lively dance—a grim fandango. I originally called it "Deeds of the Dead," which also played off the *Double Indemnity* and *Glengarry Glen Ross* connections, but LucasArts has a rule about putting the word "dead" or "death" in game titles. Around this office, people just call it "Tim's Dead Game."

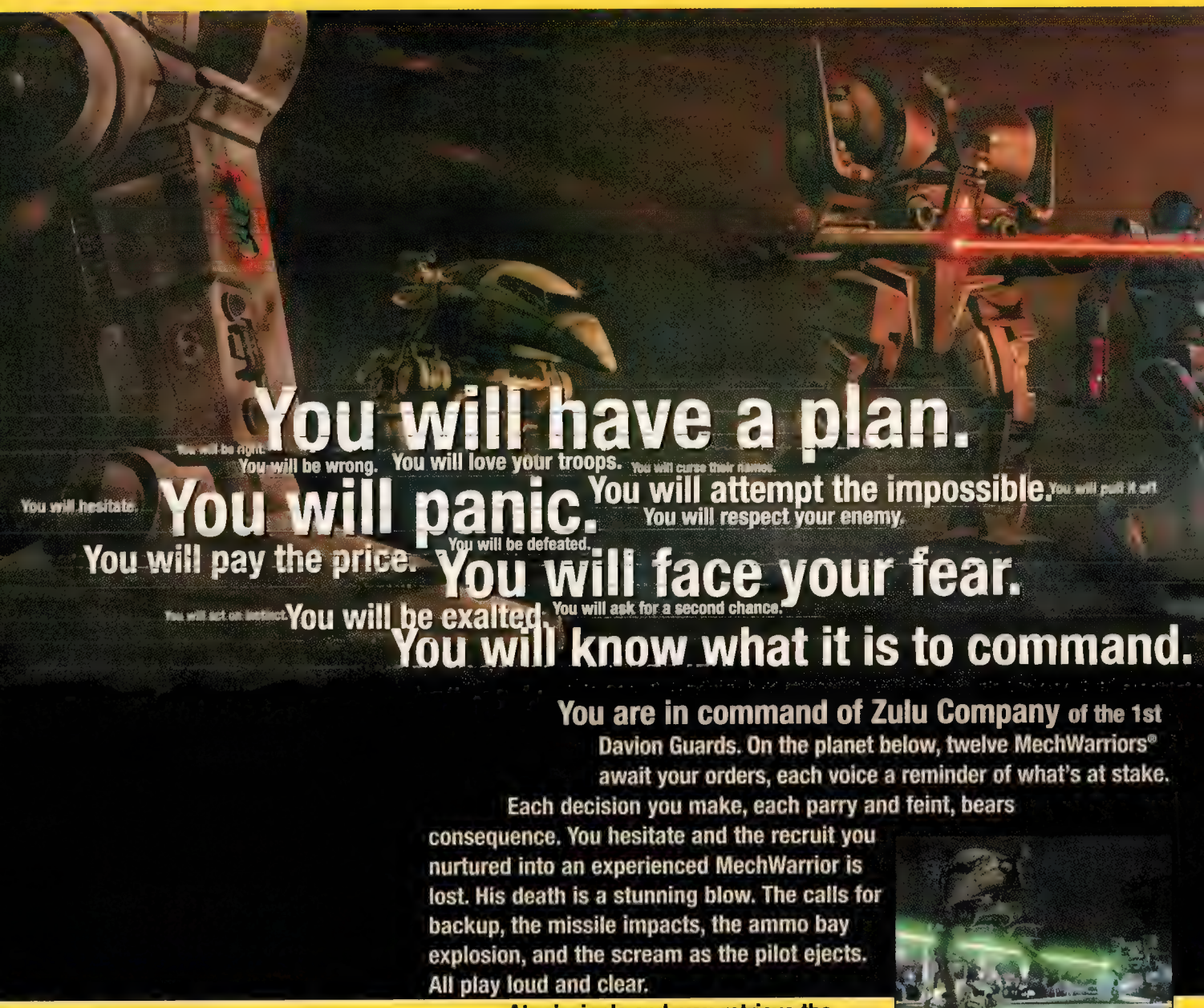
CGW: Are you worried that some people are going to feel that you're treading on, or making fun of, an ethnic heritage in this game?
Schafer: I hope not. I feel that we're treating the subject respectfully. We're not making fun of it, and we're trying to be faithful to the culture. All of the voice acting for the game's major characters, including Manny, is being performed by Latino actors and actresses.

CGW: What do you say to snobby computer gamers who worry about this game being influenced by Super MARIO 64.
Schafer: A lot of people who make adventure games don't look outside the genre—and that can lead to a real stuffy attitude. I think there's something to learn from MARIO without the game becoming a platform game.

CGW: Can we expect to see any cameos in GRIM FANDANGO, like Stan from MONKEY ISLAND, or Max?
Schafer: Well, you definitely won't see Max, since we aren't allowed to do that anymore [due to licensing issues]. But as for other cameos? What can I say? It's a LucasArts game...

CGW: Where'd you get that PaRappa the Rappa alarm clock?
Schafer: A friend brought it back from Japan. Cool, isn't it?

CGW: Yeah. Can we have it?
Schafer: No.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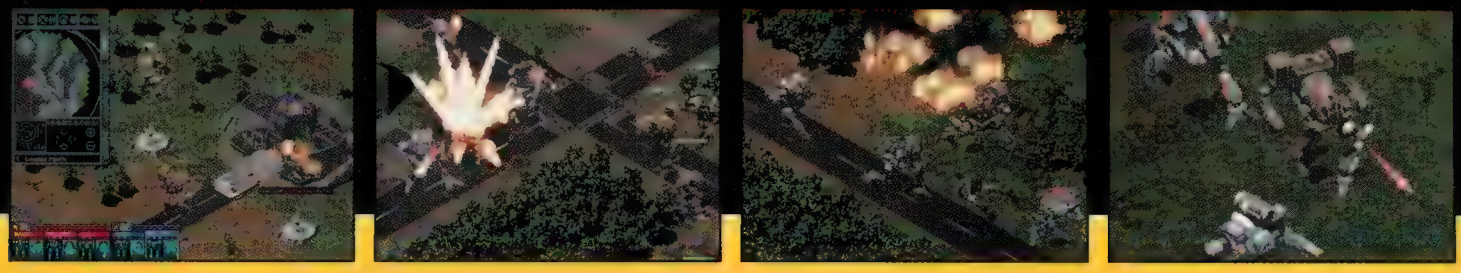

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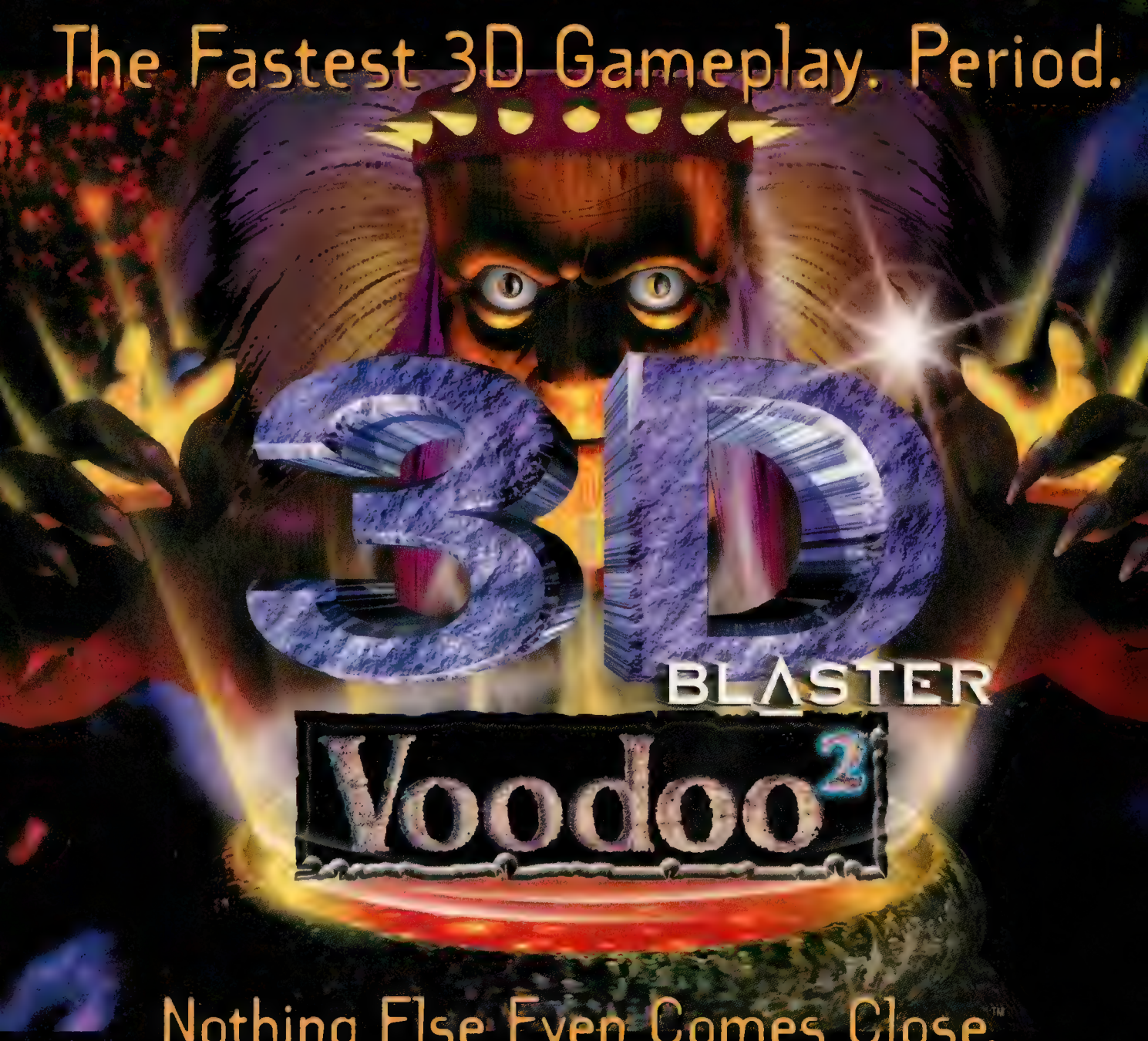

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COME HITHER? Manny's attempts to help this comely young lass will get him into all sorts of trouble, as GRIM FANDANGO twists and turns along its noirish plotline.

the lead conceptual designer on JEDI KNIGHT—draws primarily on '40s and '50s American cinema. (GRIM FANDANGO is, by the way, the first 16-bit-color adventure game for LucasArts.) The wild character art and animation was inspired by Mexican Day of the Dead art—as well as by Tim Burton's stop-motion animation film *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. All of the game's characters are 3D models with primitive masklike skulls for heads and the kind of cartoony, bent perspective found in Burton's film. The added twist is that all of the characters' facial movements—including talking—are accomplished by 2D animation superimposed over the skull heads. The resulting effect is both creepy and funny, and guarantees that, if nothing else, GRIM FANDANGO will be one of the coolest, weirdest-looking adventure games we've ever seen.

SUPER MANNY-O

Along with film noir and Mexican folklore, however, there was one other big influence on Schafer in designing GRIM FANDANGO, one that had a drastic effect on how the game is played: SUPER MARIO 64.

"When I played SUPER MARIO on the N64," Schafer says, "it really changed my perspective on how things could be done in an adventure game. A 2D adventure is kind of distancing—but in Mario, you are there, you are the character."

Schafer's experience with MARIO led him to decide for the first time to scrap the venerable SCUMM engine (the driving force behind every LucasArts adventure game for years) and create, along with lead programmer Bret Mogilefsky and other members of the team, a brand-new game engine. Gone are the "verb ring," the inventory box, and even the mouse cursor. In their place is an engine that LucasArts hopes will put you more in the game.

As Mogilefsky explains, "SCUMM was ideally suited to 2D animation, but when it came time to do a 3D game, we knew we had to break away from it." Thus, instead of pointing to the screen and clicking to where you want Manny to go, you will now be able to drive the character in continuous motion, using, if you wish, a gamepad or an analog joystick. Instead of running your cursor all over the screen to find "hot spots" with which to interact, Manny's head will turn conspicuously toward any active area he approaches onscreen. Depending on what it is, you can then press a key to perform a standard adventure gaming action—such as examining or picking up an item, or talking to another character.

SNOWBOUND The storyline in GRIM FANDANGO encompasses a large game world as Manny makes his way across the Land of the Dead, including a journey to a snow-covered Mayan temple near the end of the game.

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The team's goal with all the interface decisions was to keep things offscreen and out of the way as much as possible. They hope that this will help make the game, in Mogilefsky's words, "as aesthetically pleasing as a film." The only concession the designers have had to make to adventure gaming conventions so far is to leave conversation text onscreen—though they admit that they originally toyed with the idea of losing that as well.

CAN THE DEAD BREATHE? Act III of the four-act story takes place in an underwater prison mine, with allusions to the Bogart classic *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.

Along with a more hidden interface, the new engine has enabled the designers to pull all sorts of visual tricks, including streaming video behind characters, multiple camera setups in the same space, and numerous camera cuts and angle changes as Manny maneuvers through the world.

"Everything has been storyboarded out," says Mogilefsky. "It's probably the most extensive storyboarding we've ever done. We borrowed a lot from film noir to give it a '50s movie feel."

The move to a sophisticated 3D-engine is going to require, of course, greater computing power than was needed with the old 2D adventures, but the designers are working to ensure that the game's graphics (such as various levels of shadows) will be scalable without detracting from the experience, so that gamers with older machines will still be able to play. Those with higher-end machines, meanwhile, will be able to enjoy extra-special effects, such as the shimmer of water and rain.

ON THE ROAD Manny's buddy throughout his adventures is a large orange demon by the name of Glottis, who drives a pretty wicked hot-rod.

FUNNY BONES

If any or all of this frightens or confuses the longtime adventure gamer, rest assured that the team is working to make sure that, despite all the revolutionary changes, GRIM FANDANGO is going to feel just like a traditional LucasArts adventure. There's no platform or action elements to contend with. It's still a puzzle- and conversation-based adventure game, only one that's been taken to the next level.

And thankfully, despite the game's dark subject matter, GRIM FANDANGO still retains the classic LucasArts sense of humor. Expect the same ridiculous sight gags (such as dead, skeletal pigeons pecking at food), and the same laugh-out-loud situations and dialogue. A visit to one of the game's locations, a beatnik club for the undead, lets you jump onstage and create your own poetry, replete with such lines as "I am your failure." Once you create your poem, look later in the game for one of the characters to steal it and recite it back to you. This has nothing to do with solving the game's mysteries, of course, but is the kind of random, pointless humor that has always made the LucasArts adventures so fun.

Few companies would have the inspiration or the nerve to attempt a story like GRIM FANDANGO, and even fewer would have the talent to pull it off. Although the game still has a long way to go before it ships this fall, it already is showing the makings of being one of the highlights of 1998, especially for quality-starved adventure gamers.

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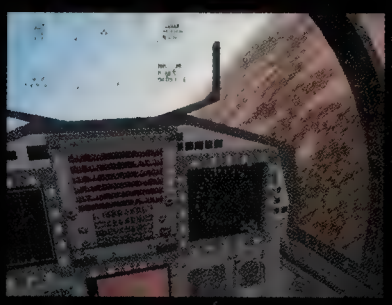

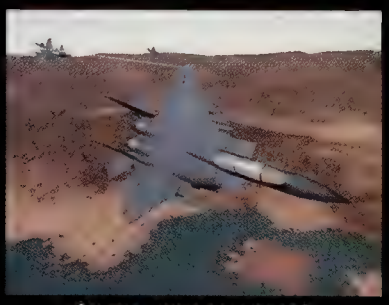

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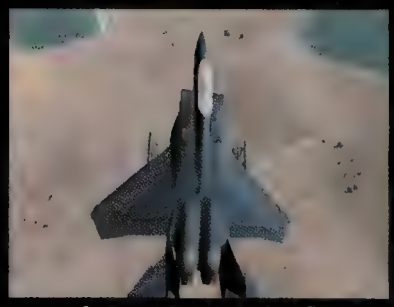

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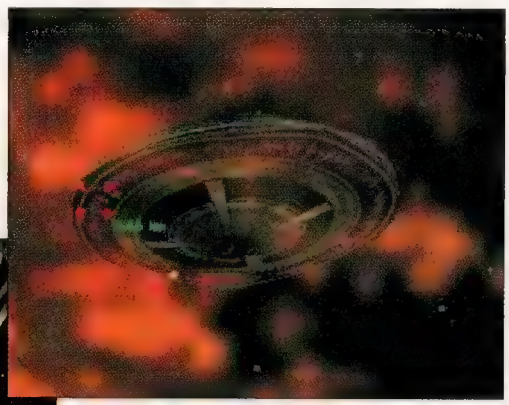
X-Commander

All-New X-COM Takes the Bughunt to the Stars With Space-Sim Combat

by Terry Coleman

When I first saw X-COM: APOCALYPSE (the third X-COM installment) at a trade show a few years back, I asked one of the game's design team why they were creating such a bleak futuristic setting for the popular sci-fi series. He replied, "This is really the only direction we thought the series could go." And when I asked him why they wouldn't instead let us play the aliens this time, he responded, "Why would anyone want to do that?" Well, APOCALYPSE turned out to be a decent game, but for most gamers it fell well short of the original X-COM, and it left many of us wondering from where our next fix of little green men would come.

I'm sorry to have to report that the newest game in the X-COM series still won't let me portray a Sectoid captain leading unspeakable horrors against milquetoast humans in some unpronounceable hamlet in Namibia or the Australian Outback. What X-COM: INTERCEPTOR *does* do, however, is take the familiar mix of evil aliens, sci-fi technology, and assorted pop culture, and move it from the strategy realm to that of space sims.



THE BETTER TO SEE YOU WITH The cockpit view gives you plenty of flavor, such as dangling wires and an "I Brake for Sectoids" sticker, but it's hard to pass on the gorgeous open view.

SAY IT AIN'T SO, XPRBL!

Before you start screaming like civilians at a Muton terror attack, try taking a morale check, and think for a minute. What could be more appropriate for a game based on sci-fi B-movies than to move into the delightfully overblown world of space opera? In X-COM: INTERCEPTOR, instead of having a static X-COM turn-based screen in front of you to intercept flying saucers, you can now actually fly around and shoot down the oversized Frisbees in realtime.

Better yet, you aren't confined to the Earth's atmosphere. INTERCEPTOR takes place on the galactic frontier, as humankind tries to tap outlying mineral-rich worlds to rebuild civilization after the desolation of the Alien Wars (the first two X-COMs). As you'd expect, our crafty alien enemies

not only have their eye on these same lucrative star systems, they also intend to utterly destroy the human race (every sentient being has a job to do).

While gameplay is largely mission-based, the game's flavor is much closer to X-COM than to WING COMMANDER. You don't have full-motion video clips of Mark Hamill assigning you to fly with a walking saber-toothed tiger for a wingmate, for example. But what you give up in glitz you gain in flexibility, for the missions generate in similar fashion to those in the classic X-COM. You might fly escort duty for freighters, then turn around and defend your X-COM star base against an alien strike force, only to go asteroid-hopping immediately thereafter. Each game the missions generate anew, making for a lot of extra quality game time.

Unlike in a typical space sim, you rarely have enough fighters to go around, especially in the early going. So, you have to take chances with numbers of intercepting fighters, as you constantly wonder whether that alien blip on the scanner is really a concerted attack on Earth, or just a feint?

In addition to keeping your too-few interceptors up and flying, you also have to develop pilots, who are rated for accuracy, flying ability, intelligence, stamina, aggressiveness, bravery, health, and even Psionics. So, in typical X-COM fashion, half the fun is in the role-playing aspects of watching your pilots progress—and crying in your Arcturian beer when you lose one of your aces to vengeful aliens.

STRATEGIC SPACE SIM?

The best X-COM attribute in INTERCEPTOR—and sure to be the most controversial—is the heavy emphasis on strategy within the framework of a traditional space sim. Simply racing around the cosmos blasting everything in sight won't stem the tide of alien aggressors—you have to research alien technology to emerge triumphant, just as in any other X-COM game. Alien tech runs the gamut from better missiles and a dizzying array of beam weapons to better sensors, armor, and base defenses. The only difference from earlier X-COMs is that you upload data to scientists on Earth, instead of having the lab coats underfoot.

And in a page right out of Galactic Quartermaster Quarterly, you have a budget to worry about. Everything costs money, and all the good things in an X-COM Commander's life, like hotshot pilots and better hyperdrive engines, cost more. If all you want to do is hop into a fighter and blast things, you can—but be warned, you're missing all the fun. Because, when you get past the initial training-type missions, INTERCEPTOR has the potential to be as deep and addictive as any X-COM in a long time.

Don't get me wrong: I'm a huge WING COMMANDER and TIE FIGHTER fan. But I've also longed to fight the whole war, from starry nebula to ominous asteroid belt, and INTERCEPTOR lets me do all that, in a gaming universe that I've enjoyed for five years.

So, sure—I'll keep bugging MicroProse to let me play aliens in an updated classic X-COM strategy game. But in the meantime, I'm impressed that they are injecting new life into this series, while staying true to the spirit of the original. Assuming that MicroProse continues to work on the enemy AI, X-COM: INTERCEPTOR should be one of this year's sleepers—even if it does straddle two gaming genres.

RETRO SKETCHBOOK

X-COM: UFO DEFENSE may have been VGA, but it did a good job of capturing a B-movie atmosphere. For INTERCEPTOR to feel like a true X-COM game, it must follow suit. As you can see from the sketches for the final product shown here, the artists have the right idea.

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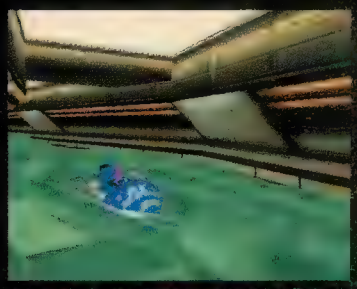
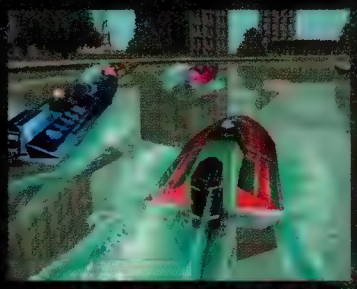
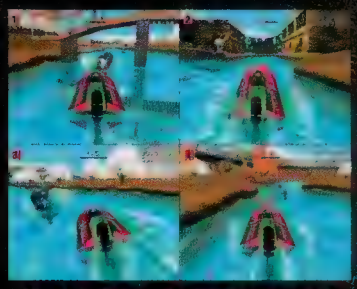


Check out the tunnels but don't get too friendly with the walls.



See the sights in New York, but watch out for the cabs!



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Azraelig	graphik	Reptile
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The 3M Volition Championships, the AMD PGL's inaugural season finale, was a jaw-dropping spectacle witnessed by 10,000 live spectators at Gameworks in Seattle. Another 15,000 caught the action via All Games Network's webcast of the event. Check out www.pgl.com for RealVideo highlights and demos of the Quake finals matches. CONGRATULATIONS to Thresh (Quake champion) and DeepBlue (Red Alert™ Champion) for their victorious performances at the world's first professional computer gaming championships!

3M Volition Championships AMD PGL PROFESSIONAL GAMERS' LEAGUE at GAMEWORKS

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Genre: Role-Playing • **ETA:** Q2 1998
Developer: Sir-Tech Software
Publisher: Sir-Tech Software

Gunning for a Repeat

Sir-Tech's Signature Franchise Is Set for a Major Face-Lift

by Loyd Case

Ian Curry, the lead designer for JAGGED ALLIANCE 2, gets 15 email messages a day about guns. It's quite amusing; apparently, says Curry, "JAGGED ALLIANCE became something of a gun enthusiast's game." According to Curry, who was discussing some of the aspects of the sequel, none of the original game's designers knew much about guns. Now they do.

The first JAGGED ALLIANCE game wrapped an interesting storyline around a limited, but highly entertaining, tactical-combat engine. Much of what fans liked about the original will remain intact. But, in hopes of making a good sequel, Sir-Tech is adding more elaborate design.

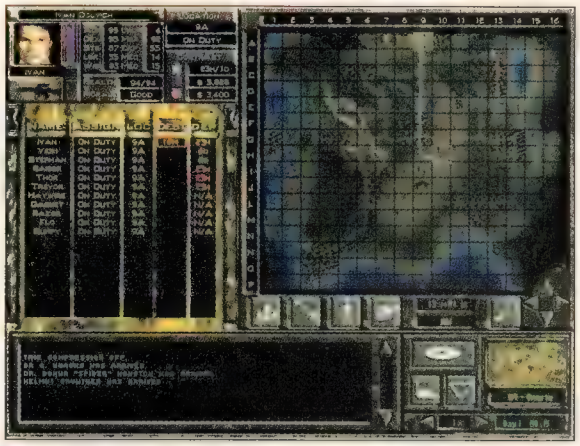
Interestingly, Curry sees JAGGED ALLIANCE 2 as a role-playing game. He suggests that the role-playing element in JA2 is stronger than in DIABLO, though not up to, say, FALLOUT. One key RPG element that Sir-Tech has added (by request) is that the player character will now be one of the combatants.

IT'S ABOUT THE STORY

Some JAGGED ALLIANCE fans were somewhat disappointed with JAGGED ALLIANCE: DEADLY GAMES. The back story for the mission-based game was very limited, but its real strengths revolved around the multiplayer game and its excellent scenario editor.

JA2 is a definite return to the roots of the original. The story focuses on a conniving, female dictator who takes power by marrying the charismatic leader of a small country and then deposes him. Your goal is to restore the leader to his rightful position.

As in JAGGED ALLIANCE, you hire a band of



BIGGER AND BETTER With a bigger playing field as just one of its enhancements, JAGGED ALLIANCE 2 offers you a lot more territory to conquer than the first game did.

GOOD NIGHT, FIDEL Sir-Tech is going with 16-bit color for more realistic graphics and effects. Here's a nighttime firefight. Note the dynamic lighting.

mercenaries, and then begin capturing territory, one region at a time. However, since this is an entire country, not a small island, there's a lot more territory to capture. Despite the fact that your squads are small forces of up to 20 combatants, moving around the country can be a challenge. In order to traverse the expanded territory, vehicles now come into play. That's right, the mercs now have a license to drive—and that includes running over any poor sap who happens to be in their way. Additionally, there's a helicopter that can move you about.

You no longer have to hire soldiers from a single mercenary hiring board (AIM), as there's a competing company, started by a former AIM member. The competition is from MERC (More Economic Recruiting Center). Let's just say it's a low-budget operation, with some potentially hilarious—or disastrous—side effects. However, it's also a place to hire cheap, low-level characters that, as befit a role-playing game, can be developed over time.

Your fighting force can expand from other sources, too. As you make your way around the country, you'll encounter NPCs. Some NPCs can be recruited, either for money or out of patriotism. If a patriot is a good fighter, all the better, since they fight for free.

Of course, any army for hire needs a constant influx of cash. The sole resource in the game comes from various mines scattered throughout the country. As you capture the mines, the local populace can mine them, supplying you with resources that can be turned into cash. This brings up another key point: Treating the local population with respect is critical to your success. Gunning down civilians won't engender cooperation and enthusiasm among the survivors. Your mercs' reputation also affects how civilians respond to you.

As the story progresses, the despot will try to take back territory—especially mines. Part of her force is comprised of JA2's vehicles and aircraft. This adds a strategic complexity that didn't exist in JAGGED ALLIANCE. You now need to worry about how to neutralize enemy air assets, what reserves to keep for defense of key areas, and even how to fight enemy vehicles.

One last role-playing element involves your player character. The hidden attributes of each character were always one of the more sophisticated features of the JAGGED ALLIANCE games.

Some of these attributes determine how the character interacts with other people, how easily the character panics, whether the character is a team player or a loner, and so on. Early in JA2, you determine your own character's visible and invisible attributes by anwering a series of questions, ULTIMA-style, ostensibly to build a "psych profile."

The interface to the external world is now through a laptop computer rather than an office metaphor. You exchange messages with AIM and other contacts via email, and you can visit Web sites to recruit mercs. This portable office makes more sense, since now you command your mercs from the front lines.

MOBILE COMPUTING It's a Web world now, folks, and your mobile office—which you use to hire mercs and vehicles—travels with you wherever you go.

GUNS, GUNS, GUNS

The tactical combat engine will be significantly spruced up. The most important change is the addition of a real-time combat engine. (Don't fear—turn-based play will still be present in the classic way.) The JA2 team is working to develop a sophisticated AI that operates in realtime. On the friendly side, you can give units general orders, such as commanding them to use covering fire and hold ground. Enemy units are set similarly and often will simply wait in ambush. This avoids the all-too-familiar "rush to the center" tactics of many real-time games. Also, units will react to things going on nearby, unlike the "thumb-twiddlers" in many real-time games.

The most visible change is the move to a 3D-like isometric view. While the object data is in 3D, the graphics are still 2D. Since the game data is in 3D, though, interesting things can occur, such as mercs climbing on top of things.

Because of the game's huge following among gun buffs, the JA2 team recruited a couple of firearm-savvy experts to help them improve the ballistics and weapons modeling. For example, high-powered rifle slugs can now penetrate a weak wooden structure to strike someone within. Additionally, combatants can target specific body areas. And the number of weapon types has been increased to nearly 50.

The game engine is now a Windows 95 DirectX engine, in full 16-bit color. This allows Sir-Tech to implement dynamic lighting effects and create more realistic graphics.

LOCKED AND LOADED

Schedules are always iffy, but Sir-Tech is shooting for an early summer release. While I hope they resist the urge to ship JA2 before its time, I can't wait to get my hands on the final.

Since the original JAGGED ALLIANCE, a number of squad-level, tactical combat games have emerged—some very good, some not. JAGGED ALLIANCE 2 has the right elements to be a hit, and Sir-Tech hopes it will be one that appeals to both strategy gamers and role-playing buffs. We'll await the results eagerly.

RPG RTS The role-playing elements from JAGGED ALLIANCE return. You'll occasionally encounter NPCs, some of whom you can recruit for your squad.

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Genre: RPG ETA: Q2 1998
Developer: SquareSoft USA
Publisher: Eidos Interactive

Finally, Final Fantasy

SquareSoft's Epic FINAL FANTASY VII Migrates to the PC

by Thierry Nguyen

Last September, millions of PlayStation owners across the United States popped a game disc in their consoles and were greeted by a familiar piano melody. They pressed the Start button on their pads, sat back in their chairs, watched the opening movie, and became immediately entranced. The game, which sold millions of copies worldwide, was FINAL FANTASY VII, the latest console RPG from SquareSoft. Now, in a matter of months, computer gamers will finally get to see what all the ballyhoo is about.

While series such as WIZARDRY and ULTIMA have dominated the computer RPG genre since the early '80s, Square Co. Ltd. in Japan has quietly defined the console RPG since its release of FINAL FANTASY I in 1987. Computer RPGs have usually been nonlinear, turn-based world-exploration games; the console RPG has gone for the emotional and epic storyline, with fast-paced real-time combat. With the release of FINAL FANTASY VII for the PC, these two subgenres will merge.

FUTURE VERSUS FANTASY

The FINAL FANTASY series has always emphasized plot. With each installment comes an incredibly immersive story filled with love, betrayal, and death in many forms: a story worthy of a film or novel—or some of the deeper computer adventure games. FINAL FANTASY VII is no exception.

The game starts with the world under the domination of the Shin-Ra Corporation, a ruthless company that has learned to tap into the very life energy of the planet (called "Mako") and use it as a power source. The player assumes the role of Cloud Strife, a mercenary who has been hired by Avalanche, an "environmental revolutionary" group, to help destabilize Shin-Ra by destroying its Mako reactors. What begins as a straightforward rebellion against the corporate government, however, soon becomes—through a series of plot twists—a struggle for life itself on the planet.

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

FINAL FANTASY VII plays differently from any other computer RPG you've ever seen. You control a party of three characters (you choose from a list of nine and can switch characters on the fly) and spend the bulk of the game talking to NPCs in order to advance the story, similar to an adventure game. Of course, you need to talk to the right character at the right place and time.

The combat system in FINAL FANTASY is truly like no other. It's a far cry from the turn-based combat of FALLOUT, but it's not the mouse-clicking frenzy of DIABLO. When you enter combat, you're taken you to a separate screen: Your party occupies one side; your foes are lined up on the other. Each party member gets a turn in which to execute an action, whether it's to attack, cast a spell, or use an item. Once a character has performed an action, he or she can't act again until a certain amount of time passes, as indicated by a meter. Although the turn-taking resembles that of traditional RPGs, it all happens in real-time, so the enemy can attack while you're deciding, rather than wait for your turn to be complete.

The magic system also differs

YOUR TURN—AND HURRY! FINAL FANTASY VII combines both real-time and turn-based elements. Each combatant gets a turn, based on a running timer—so you may get attacked in midturn.

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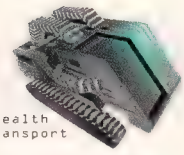
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MK3 Walker

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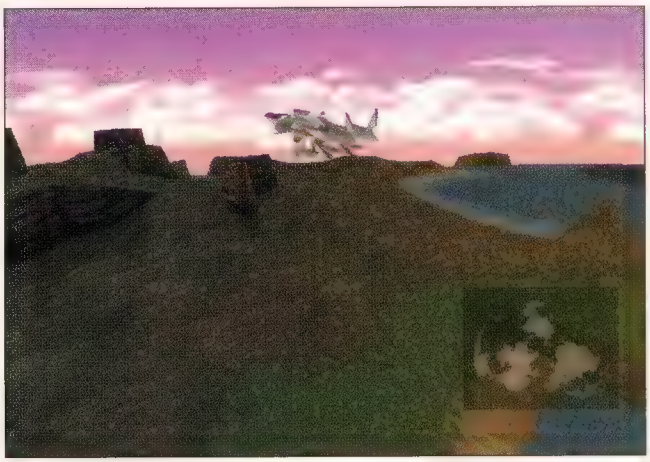


WHOLE NEW WORLD FINAL FANTASY VII's graphics were justly praised as some of the best ever seen on a PlayStation. With 3D acceleration, they should be even better on the PC.

dramatically from that in any other game. Rather than use reagents or spellbooks, the magic is dependent on an item called "Materia," or crystallized chunks of Mako energy. Different pieces of materia have different properties, and each chunk can be placed on any weapon or armor, affecting the outfitted character in unique ways. Not only does the item get the properties of the materia, but each materia lets you cast different spells or execute different moves. Some allow you to cast regenerative spells; others let you summon powerful creatures into battle (a staple in FINAL FANTASY games). Materia also gains experience, so you can build up more powerful spells by using the same materia more often. With this magic system, the game essentially lets any character cast any spell, as long as the materia is available and the character has room to use it.

VIEW FROM ABOVE While you explore other locations, FINAL FANTASY assumes an isometric viewpoint similar to games like FALLOUT, but the graphic style is more animated.

FINAL LOOK

The PC port of FINAL FANTASY VII is identical to the PlayStation version in terms of plot (despite rumors on the Internet); the main differences lie in technical enhancements. The most obvious difference between the PC port and the PlayStation game is the graphics acceleration. While there will be a software-only version (which we haven't seen), Square is using Direct3D as the foundation for its graphics enhancements; the company is also talking to chipset makers (such as 3Dfx) about optimizing the engine for specific chips.

We saw the game running Direct3D on a 3Dfx board, and the difference is significant. Imagine the original PlayStation graphics, but with a much crisper look and running at a blazingly high frame rate. That's the advantage of 3D acceleration. The characters are all drawn in high resolution, the backgrounds are filtered to look less pixelated, and the battle scenes include effects like smoke and translucency. And when Square turned on the frame-rate counter, we saw all these effects in the midst of battle at a blistering 60-70 frames per second, dipping lower only when enacting a complex summon spell on multiple creatures. The downside is that with all of these polygons tossed around in battle, Square is anticipating a P166 as the minimum requirement.

To make the game as pleasing to the ear as it is to the eye, Square has enlisted Yamaha to help convert the sounds and music. The PlayStation has its own MIDI chip, and Square didn't want its quality music to be diluted by the FM synthesis chips found in most sound cards. With that in mind, Square asked Yamaha to develop a software synthesizer so that those with Sound Blaster 16 cards will get wavetable-quality music. And those of you who purchased Yamaha cards with the XG instrument set (general MIDI with some extras thrown in) will be rewarded with a more in-depth musical score, as all those instruments will be used.

As for the control scheme, Square is disregarding the mouse (which wouldn't really work) and opting for a base keyboard configuration with an emphasis on gamepad support. Since the game will use Direct Input, any DirectX-compliant gamepad will work. When we visited, Square was still implementing the configuration.

For saving games, Square has retained the PlayStation holdover of 30 save slots, though the developers may add more and may let you name your games. The game is expected to take up about 200MB of hard-drive space, so that you don't have to bear with the infamous load time of the PlayStation. And Square is cleaning up the translation text, so that phrases like "They is sick" will hopefully be a thing of the past.

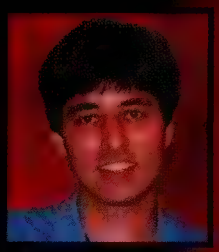
CLOUD NINE

As of this writing, SquareSoft had only the sound and one minigame left to test before going to beta, which the company anticipates happening in March. With bug testing and fixing going on for a few months more, plus the duplication process, the game could still conceivably make a summer release.

It really is a gamble as to whether or not the computer RPGer is ready for such a different play style. And FINAL FANTASY *will* influence the future of this subgenre, because if it can't succeed on the PC, it's hard to imagine what console game can. Whether or not people can throw away their old-school computer RPG training and embrace this completely new style is something to be watched when FINAL FANTASY VII finally arrives on the PC.

When we set out to create Descent: FreeSpace - The Great War, our goal was the same as with Descent: We're going to create the kind of game we want to play.

"We've been working on *Descent: FreeSpace - The Great War* for two years, longer than the original Descent. And it shows. **The things Descent players will expect are all here**: the best technology, the best A.I., the best physics, great gameplay and the continuous sense of wonder and surprise. It's the kind of experience you can only create when you pour yourselves into your game for a very long time.



Mike Kulas
President of Volition and Designer of the award winning Descent and Descent II

We learned a lot when we wrote the Descent A.I. and we applied all that to *Descent: FreeSpace - The Great War*. It's in a whole new class. **The A.I. system is three times as large**, much deeper and much more flexible. Every ship has its own set of goals it pursues through an environment that is the richest ever. We observed how human players handle complex situations and coded the A.I. to do the same intelligent things.

In *Descent: FreeSpace - The Great War*, everything you do has an important consequence. Not only is the mission branching non-linear, but the choices you make in a mission, such as whether to protect a ship, can have profound consequences. **This offers almost limitless replayability.**

Descent: FreeSpace - The Great War will be the greatest multiplayer space sim ever. In fact, multiplayer code was planned from day one. Plus, we're launching a free matching and tracking service through our website. You'll always be able to find a game on the Internet. And we're going to track games so everyone will know who are the best players in the world.

When *Descent: FreeSpace - The Great War* ships this April, it will do to the space combat market what Descent did to first person shooters. We will have **set the new standard** everyone else will have to measure up to."

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Parallax Software

Designed for Microsoft Windows 95

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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THE CREATORS OF

DESCENT™

TAKE YOU OUT OF THE TUNNELS AND INTO THE VAST WONDERS OF SPACE.

AND WHEN WE SAY

V A S T

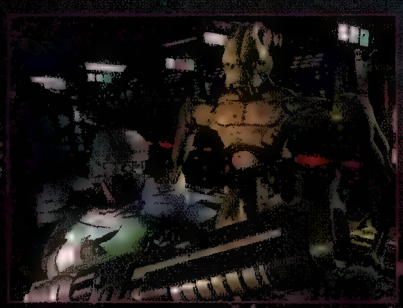
YOU ARE HERE

(Yes. The massive capital ship is the actual model from the game. And yes, all ships are to scale.)

Over 40 jaw-dropping real-time ships with dynamic lighting, stunning effects, animation and unprecedented levels of realism and detail.

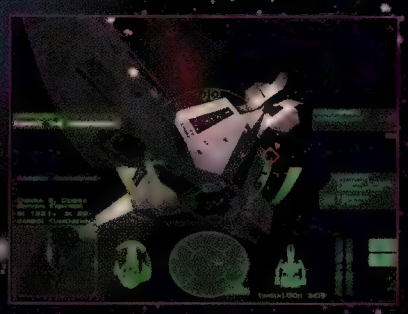
Command intelligent squadmates, redirect up to 12 wingmen and request reinforcements for unbelievably intense dogfights.

3 unique species, each with their own strengths, weaknesses, tactics, ships and fighting characteristics.

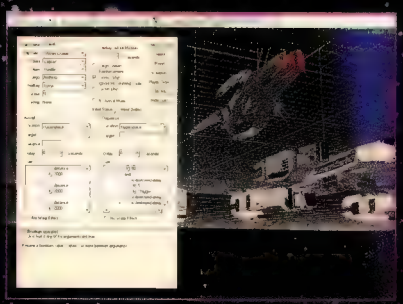


Organize "wings" of teammates, track your statistics, ranking, and medals against players from all over Earth with **16 PLAYER INTERNET** support.

Choose from 8 different fighters and bombers, outfit them with a wide array of advanced weaponry.



Create your own detailed missions using "FRED", the fully-featured mission editor.



WE MEAN

V A S T

DESCENT

FREESPACE

THE GREAT WAR™

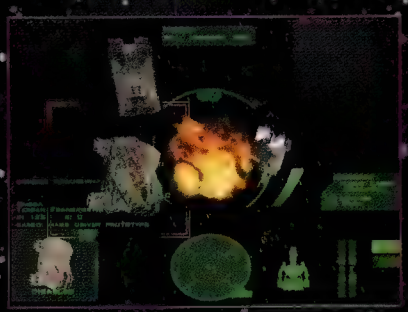
GAMEPLAY AS BIG AS THE CAPITAL SHIPS

COMING SPRING '98

Engage in space combat against massive capital ships and destroyers of awesome size and detail.

Advanced artificial intelligence (AI) system created by the same people that made DESCENT so incredible.

Selectively target ship subsystems, defensive turrets, and fighter bays with an in-depth HUD combat system.



GO TO #162 @ www.computergaming.com/infolink

Genre: Simulation • ETA: Q2 1998
Developer: Ultimation
Publisher: SSI

SSI Steppes Out

Panzer Commander Is a Potential Breakthrough WWII Tank Sim

by Patrick Miller

The success of MicroProse's M1 Tank Platoon left many armor fans hoping that a WWII tank simulation would soon follow in the tracks of that classic game. Yet in the past nine years, publishers have focused on the M1 Abrams, ignoring the huge potential of simulating other armored vehicles and conflicts during and after World War II.

With the scheduled release of Panzer Commander in May, however, SSI will launch a blitzkrieg into this long-neglected area. Dave Bringhurst and Troy Herre of Ultimation developed the game engine that powers Panzer Commander and have working with SSI for two years to prepare the final product. From what we've seen so far, it's been well worth the wait.

INTO THE BREECH

In this game, you portray a tank platoon commander in either the German, British, Russian, or American armies. There are approximately 10 scenarios for each nationality, plus 6 historical campaigns, each of which has 24 to 33 linear scenarios. As the commander, you can opt to coordinate your platoon's activities during combat or take control of different stations in your tank. These include the driver, gunner, and hull machine-gunner. The commander has buttoned and unbuttoned views, as well as an unbuttoned binocular zoom view.

"We aren't trying to do anything other than make a fun, reasonably realistic simulation," says Rick Martinez of SSI, Panzer Commander's producer. While the sim does strive to immerse you in WWII tank atmosphere, it occasionally sacrifices strict adherence to accuracy and realism for gameplay.

For example, players will have the choice of firing either armor-piercing (AP) or high-explosive (HE) ammunition, even though most tanks carried a wider variety of rounds. During a campaign, it's assumed that tanks will have the best AP round available for the time period in which a battle takes place. As a lowly platoon commander you have no control over support vehicles, artillery barrages, or close air support.

TREADS TURNING HEADS

Graphically, Panzer Commander promises to be one of the best armored-warfare simulations yet. The game features real-time 3D rendering, texture mapping, directional lighting, fog effects, and support for many popular 3D accelerators. All vehicle types are highly detailed and can be easily recognized. There are winter, summer, and desert camouflage schemes. Some vehicles feature crew-painted artwork, such as Soviet political slogans.

In Panzer Commander, you'll be able to drive 14 German, 11 Russian, 10 British, and 5 American vehicles (see sidebar); the game also includes numerous support vehicles (which you can't drive). You won't see infantry moving around the battlefield. Mechanized infantry is represented by half-track mounted troops. In some missions, your tank platoon will be called upon to clear out infantry strongholds, such as machine-gun nests, bunkers, and antitank weapons.

SAY GOODNIGHT A Panther turns an American light tank into a blazing wreck with one shot from its 75mm gun. The level of detail here is typical of Panzer Commander's excellent 3D graphics.

RED MEAT This T-34 is about to meet its maker, because the game realistically models the difficulty that WWII tanks experienced when attempting to fire on the move.

Infantry can occupy buildings, making tank battles in towns as hazardous as they were in real life.

Despite SSI's history of producing wargames that feature campaigns with British and American armor, PANZER COMMANDER curiously offers campaigns from the German and Russian perspectives only. As Martinez explains, that's because when engagements are condensed down to the tank-against-tank level, the inferiority of Western armor becomes more pronounced—and not much fun. German campaigns are with the Grossdeutschland, 2nd, and 21st divisions; Russian campaigns are with the 5th, 8th, and 12th Guards divisions.

REALITY FIGHTS

The sim does a nice job of portraying vehicle physics. As tanks move, their road wheels rise and dip with each bump and indentation in the ground. When a tank fires its main gun, the vehicle recoils from the force and a plume of smoke streams from its barrel. Tanks slow as they climb hills and will slip and slide on ice and mud.

The armor effectiveness for each vehicle is rated on the turret front, turret side, hull front, hull side, and top. Armor slope and the angle at which a shot strikes the armor are calculated to determine whether the shot penetrates. Tanks can suffer a variety of damage, including damaged guns, tracks, and crew casualties. Other aspects modeled include rate of turret rotation and vehicle power-to-weight ratio. Tank crews are rated for skill and morale, which can improve in the course of a campaign.

To extend the game's replay value, the developers plan to include a full-featured scenario editor to enable players to create battles from history or hypothetical engagements. "You will have the same power to make scenarios as the SSI design team," Martinez says.

Terrain can be sculpted to create hills and valleys of varying grades. Players have the option of setting weather, victory conditions, unit types, and unit behavior. Forests, hedges, walls, roads, bridges, and a wide variety of military and civilian structures are also available.

TANK VERSUS TANK

Multiplayer capability for head-to-head and networked gaming will also be included, along with 12 multiplayer scenarios. Game types will feature capture-the-flag battles, free-for-alls, three-on-three duels, and two-player games in which each person commands a tank platoon.

SSI says the minimum requirements for this game will be a 133MHz Pentium, 16MB RAM, and a 4x CD-ROM. I ran the beta (on which this preview is based) on a 166MHz MMX Pentium with 32MB RAM, a 24x CD-ROM, and an Orchid Righteous 3D accelerator, which is very similar to SSI's recommended system requirements. On this system, the action was impressively smooth, even when multiple vehicles were engaged in combat.

Martinez says the game will support ThrustMaster and CH Products joystick and pedal controls, although the game proved surprisingly easy to play using the keyboard alone. One important aspect of the game that couldn't be judged for this preview is its artificial intelligence. Martinez is confident that the tactical AI, based on a threat-assessment system, will be realistic and workable.

The appeal of PANZER COMMANDER is obvious, as fans of World War II armor will at last be able to battle with German Tigers at Kursk, set American Shermans ablaze in the Ardennes, and joust with the Desert Fox in North Africa. Considering how long we've been waiting, here's hoping the game lives up to its huge potential.

FOR YOUR INFO A data screen is available for each of the user-controlled tanks and support vehicles..

Armored Fighting Vehicles at Your Command

PANZER COMMANDER provides 40 German, Russian, American, and British vehicles for players to command from the beginning of the war in 1939 to its end in 1945. Although each vehicle features distinctive external characteristics, there will be only one interior for each nationality.

"We spent a great deal of time crawling around inside of tanks and photographing them," says Martinez. "You'd be amazed at how similar the interiors of tanks from the same nationality look."

In addition, there are 20 non-drivable support vehicles, including trucks, armored cars, assault guns, tank destroyers, half tracks, and weapons carriers—every bit as detailed in appearance and performance as the tanks. Martinez hinted that SSI might give players the ability to hack game files to command support vehicles as well.

VEHICLES MODELED FOR PANZER COMMANDER

German
PzKpfw 38t Skoda
PzKpfw III ausf. F, G, H, J
PzKpfw IV ausf. F2, G, H, J
PzKpfw IV "Tiger" ausf. E
PzKpfw V "Panther" ausf. D, A, G
PzKpfw IV "Tiger II" ausf. B

Russian
BT-5
BT-7
KV-1A, 1C, 1S
T34/76A, B, C
KV-85
IS-II Josef Stalin
T34/85

American
M4A3 Sherman
M4A3E8 Sherman (Easy Eight)
M4A3E2 Sherman (Jumbo)
M24 Chafee
M26 Pershing

British
Matilda Mk. II
Cruiser Mk. VI Crusader I
Valentine Mk. IX
Churchill IV
Cruiser Mk. III Cromwell I, III, IV, VII
Cruiser Comet
Firefly

RANGERS NEVER GO IT ALONE

A second Ranger goes where you go, watching your back, following your commands – and trusting you with his life.

JOIN THE RANGERS, SEE THE WORLD

SpecOps: Rangers Lead the Way takes you from snowy Korean forests to steamy South American jungles.

RANGERS ALWAYS SWEAT THE DETAILS

From uniforms and vehicles to the foreign languages spoken by enemy soldiers, everything is authentic.

Like the U.S. Army Rangers, **SpecOps: Rangers Lead the Way** isn't for lightweights. It's intensely real, with motion-capture technology, photorealistic textures, stunning outdoor 3D environments and actual ambient and weapons sounds. Your missions range from blowing up SCUD bases in North Korea to rescuing hostages in Afghanistan. You might even receive a medal. But that's not why you signed up. You joined to uphold the honor of the Rangers and your country. **So let's go, soldier. Your country needs you.**

AMERICA DIDN'T GET TO BE THE
most powerful nation on earth
BY ASKING NICELY.
Highly skilled and
expertly trained, the
U.S. Army Rangers
are the most revered
– and feared –
fighting unit in the world.
Now you can put it
all on the line and be
one of them.
ripcord
Zombie
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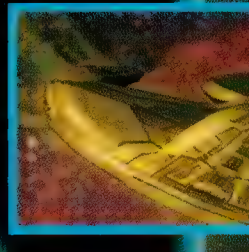
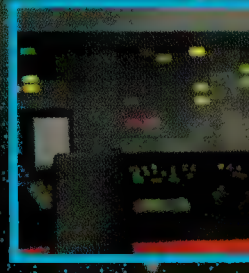
RP
SPEC OPS:
Rangers Lead the Way
Your COUNTRY.
Your HONOR.
Your TURN.

WARP





SPEED

The Next Generation of Star Trek Games

Game designers have been boldly going to the *Star Trek* universe since the days of 32K mainframe computers. And just like the *Trek* series and movies, the results have been inconsistent. Some of the games have stuck to *Trek* lore and included great gameplay to provide "The Best of Both Worlds," while others could have used some help from "Spock's Brain," appearing to be halfhearted attempts to make an easy buck off the license. And sometimes the best efforts of game designers have been squelched by having to balance creativity with a host of restrictions imposed by Paramount—a true "Balance of Terror."

Now another batch of licensed *Star Trek* games is about to warp in, and we beamed our red shirts down to check them out. Initial scans are promising—sensors have detected the use of the latest gaming technologies and high levels of storyline. Our away team's report follows.

pg. 99 Star Trek: Starfleet Command

pg. 105 Star Trek: First Contact

pg. 99 Klingon Honor Guard

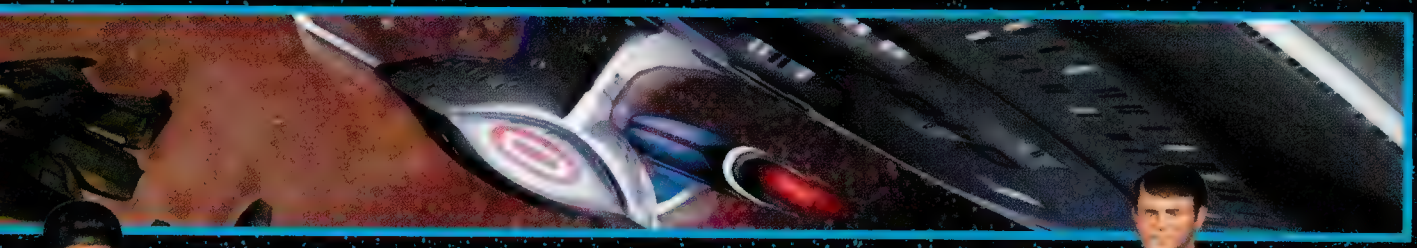
pg. 104 Secret of Vulcan Fury

pg. 104 Birth of the Federation

pg. 110 Pool Pirate

pg. 112 Voyeur Accuses in the Trek Universe

pg. 108 Star Trek: The Game Show



Star Trek: Starfleet Command

Developer: Quicksilver
Publisher: Interplay Productions
Era: Original Series
Genre: Strategy
Target Release Date: 04 1998-01 1999

Star Trek Makes the Jump to the Real-Time Frontier

by Elliott Chin

No doubt about it: Classic *Star Trek* is infinitely more conducive to a tactical strategy game than *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. In the 23rd century, there is no peace between the Klingons and the Federation. The Romulans are still a mysterious adversary, and much of the galaxy remains an unconquered frontier. It was during this time that Captain Kirk and the *Enterprise* saved the universe on a daily basis, confronting ever-new aliens and dangers. This untamed universe provides the perfect backdrop for a real-time ship-to-ship strategy game, which is exactly what STAR TREK: STARFLEET COMMAND is.

Interplay has been working with developers Quicksilver for quite some time on this title, which differs from other real-time strategy games by being a tactical and military career simulation. The scope of your command is much more limited, though no less complex. There are no hordes of minions to command; instead, you are put in charge of a starship and her crew. All you have to do is save the galaxy.

Command Track

The single-player game consists of 20-30 missions strung together in a "career," STARFLEET's version of a campaign. In each mission, you command from one to three ships, as well as all the ship systems and crews.

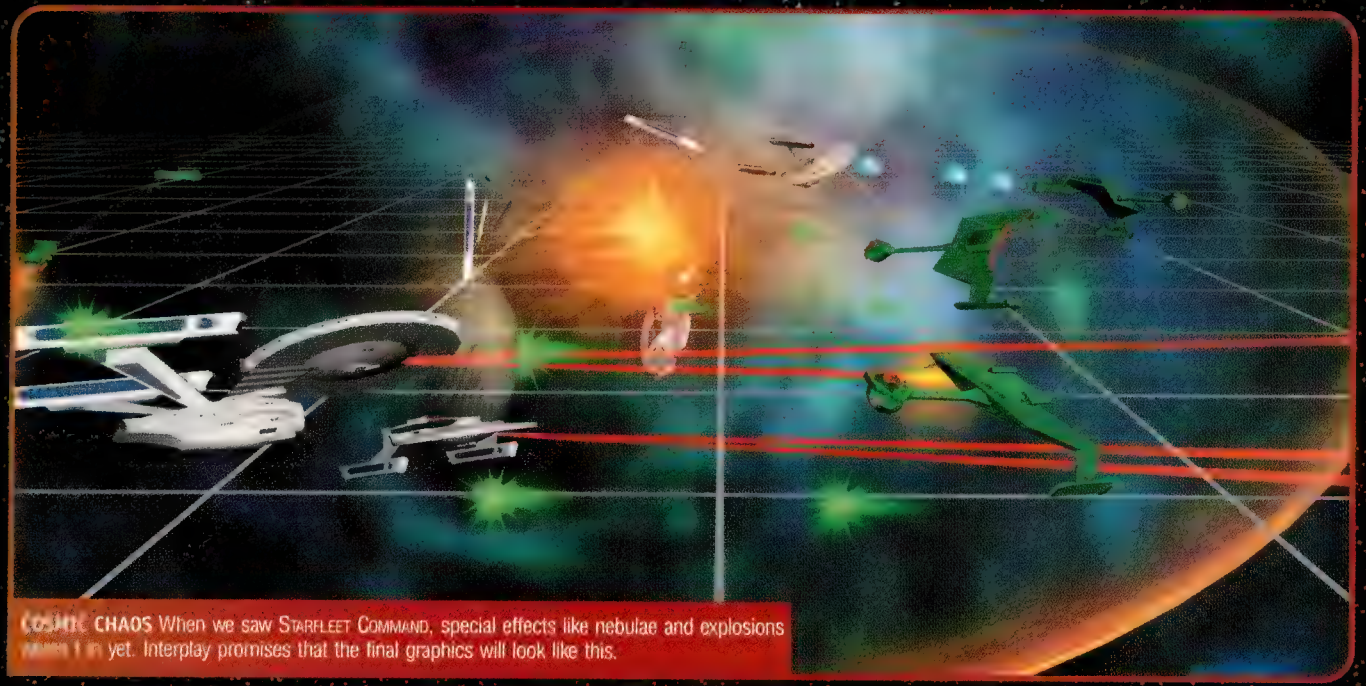
In each mission, you will engage in ship-to-ship battles, board enemy ships, repel boarders, regulate shield and power outputs, and generally do all the things you saw Kirk, Scotty, and the others do in those classic *Star Trek* episodes. In keeping with the *Star Trek* tradition, battles won't be frantic click-fests; instead, ships will move about for minutes, jockeying for position as you adjust and readjust shields and weapons in a deliberate starship engagement. Space terrain, such as nebulae and planets, will also affect your battles: Thus, you could engage in battles reminiscent of the confrontation between Khan and Kirk in the Mutara Nebula in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*.

With all these ships and stellar objects, there is a lot to see, and it will be brought to life in true 3D. Beautifully texture-mapped, shaded polygons will be used to construct everything from ships to planets. Interplay also plans to have 3D-card support, so that this cerebral *Star Trek* strategy game will have plenty of eye-candy. Unfortunately, while the graphics are 3D, combat is still played out on a 2D plane. (Interplay feels that 3D space wouldn't add to the gameplay and would needlessly confuse things.)

SPACE DOCK When you're not engaged in missions, one of the many things you'll do—aside from manage your career—is customize your starship.

The Dynamics of *Trek*

While many of the missions you'll play revolve around space battles, there are a variety of tasks to perform. For instance, you might have to escort vessels, conduct probe scans, defend outposts, attack vital enemy territories, or patrol neutral zones. To increase variety, the



COSMIC CHAOS When we saw STARFLEET COMMAND, special effects like nebulae and explosions weren't in yet. Interplay promises that the final graphics will look like this.

DIE, FEDERATION SCUM You can play as one of six alien races, including the Klingons, each with distinct ships and racial bonuses.

forces opposing you will always be random. In one escort mission, you might face three Klingon battlecruisers; in another, you might face only one. That's because STARFLEET COMMAND's campaign is completely dynamic. Random dice rolls generate the campaign missions, with modifiers applied for all sorts of things: your racial disposition (Klingon or Federation, for example), the race of the beings in your current sector, your rank and reputation in your fleet, and the outcomes of previous missions, to name a few.

This dynamic universe—which Interplay calls the Dynaverse—also takes into account your in-game persona. You will have a presence and prestige points, which will increase as you succeed in more missions and make a name for yourself. In your own way, you will be your game's equivalent of Captain Kirk, and the Dynaverse will adjust for that by increasing the number of dangerous missions or by agitating the galaxy's political state as you become more capable of handling disasters.

TREK TANGO You'll be able to engage in epic starship duels with friends over LAN, and the Internet.

Interplay and Quicksilver definitely have ambitious plans for STARFLEET COMMAND, and if even half of what they propose reaches daylight, they could have a real-time tactical game that finally makes us feel right at home in the captain's chair.

SPACE BRAWL Starfleet Command begins as real-time game, in a familiar ship simulation with easy controls, but plenty of strategic depth.

Mission Briefings

Alan Emrich, the producer on Star Trek: Starfleet Command, was gracious enough to give us an interview about this upcoming title. For even more details, visit our Web site, **cgw.gamespot.com**, where Emrich discusses the game's time period, the races in the game, and its multiplayer support.

CGW: How is STARFLEET COMMAND different from other real-time strategy games?

Alan Emrich: Many people think of real-time strategy games as "who can build the biggest bunch of units and pig-pile them on the other guy's command center."

That's not *Star Trek*. Cranking out a zillion starships, selecting them en masse, then flinging them at the other guy's homeworld—gee, I never saw that in any of the original *Star Trek* episodes or the movies. So what sets this game apart is what you might call *Star Trek* fidelity, which means it's not a clone of RTS games. Those were the "last thing." We're creating the "next thing."

CGW: Is there a greater emphasis on squadron-level tactics or grand strategy?

Alan Emrich: This isn't grand strategy. You spend most of your time managing two resources: the ship(s) under your command and your own career. Both require special attention and finesse.

Your command ship is under your control in each mission, but there might also be escort vessels or convoy ships under your command. Alternately, you might find yourself in an engagement where you're part of a larger fleet and have your own orders to follow within the top brass' Big Picture of that mission. You have a real career officer/captain's eye view of the world, and we plan to immerse you in that role.

CGW: Is there more to the title than the tactical missions? Is there a rich campaign or backstory that drives the game?

Alan Emrich: Yes. While most of your time will be spent rolling the mouse around making command decisions, between each [mission] the galaxy is evolving. Rather than a scripted story in which you go online and complain about how "Mission 4 was lame," you have your own unique story unfolding as you play STARFLEET COMMAND. During a Career Game, the cosmic clock goes "tick" between each mission. When it does, empires rise and fall, economies thrive and stagnate, civil wars can break out, united fronts can arise—wars, alliances, betrayals; all the things that make the galaxy interesting.

We've developed a Dynaverse (Dynamic Universe) game engine that evolves a background story for the entire galaxy, then lets you know what part you're to play during your next mission. This is told to you in a classic *Star Trek* Captain's Log entry. Starfleet may have assigned you to a hot border or a cool unexplored region of space depending on the government you serve, its policies, racial tendencies, and foreign relations. The Dynaverse engine generates a custom-built mission, specific to your location and what is happening out there at that time. There is such a plethora of mission types, subtypes, variables, and random events that you shouldn't see the same mission twice no matter how long you play this game.

And it's not just the proverbial dog (Dynaverse) wagging the tail (you), either. As you progress your career and rise in status among Starfleet, you can reach out and try to wag the dog! Whether you spend your influence getting the crew to violate the Prime Directive without a mutiny, fast-talking an enemy captain, weaseling a medal or rank you haven't been recognized for, or attempting to influence Starfleet of government policy, it's up to you.

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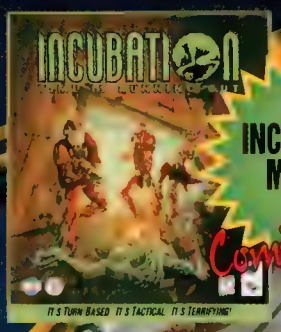

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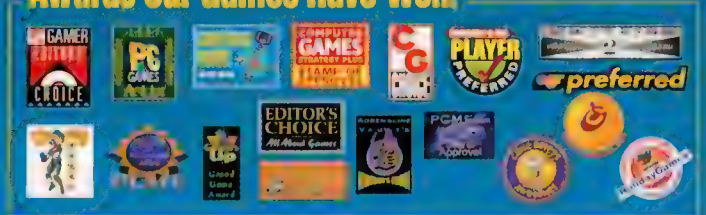

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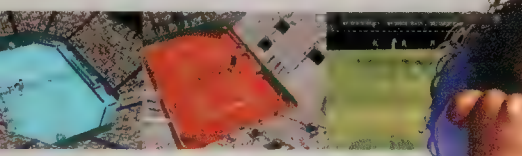

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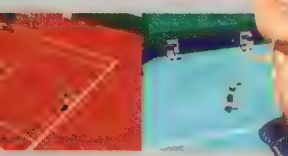

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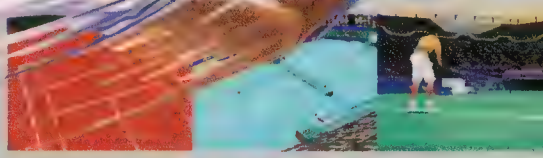

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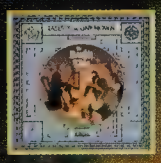

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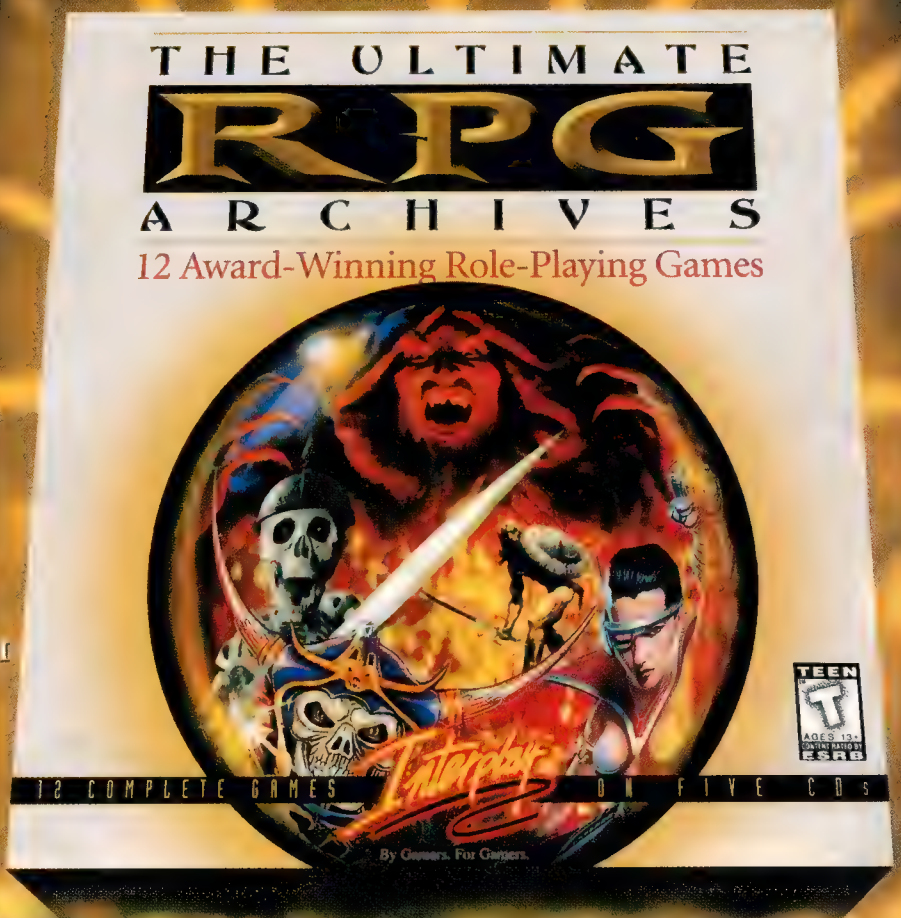

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Star Trek: First Contact

The Borg Are Back in This Digital Sequel

by Elliott Chin

Developer: Visionary Media
Publisher: MicroProse
Title: Next Generation
Genre: Action
Target Release Date: Q4 1998

As much as game companies would like to think otherwise, movie licenses aren't always a sure bet for a hit. That's especially true for games based on two-year-old movies, even a *Star Trek* movie. One case in point is MicroProse's STAR TREK: GENERATIONS, a poorly executed 3D action/adventure game that followed too far after the movie's release. The folks at MicroProse learned a lot from this abortive game, and they are making sure they don't make the same mistakes for their next *Star Trek* movie-based game—STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT.

Bold New Direction

MicroProse didn't want to fall into the trap of releasing a game with a plot that was already resolved in a two-year old movie. They decided to circumvent the problem by making the game FIRST CONTACT a sequel to the movie of the same name. So forget what happened in the movie, this is a whole new ball game. According to the game's story, while Picard was destroying the Borg Queen's body at the end of *First Contact*, she was secretly downloading her brain into the *Enterprise-E*'s computer. Several months later, as the *Enterprise* crew is studying the remaining Borg units in a holding cell, she manages to take over a hapless scientist and begin her covert takeover of the Federation's flagship. Once the holding cell where the Borg are held is captured, the crew of the *Enterprise* is alerted to the Queen's infiltration. It's at this point that the game begins. As the command crew of the *Enterprise*, you must stop the Queen before she gains control of the ship.

The Thinking-Man's Game

While GENERATIONS was an action/adventure hybrid, MicroProse is quick to point out that FIRST CONTACT is an action game with some tactical elements thrown in. In short, it's a thinking man's action game. The game is mission-based, not level-based, as with many other first-person shooters. There are a total of 10 missions (MicroProse refers to them as episodes), which take place at various locations aboard the *Enterprise*. For example, a single mission could encompass the bridge, sick bay, and the holodeck. Each mission is also story-driven, with multiple goals dictated by the storyline. The second mission, for example, has four goals—securing the transporter room from the Borg, getting to the computer core to restore power to parts of the ship, clearing the hangar of Borg, and gaining access to the impulse engines. MicroProse promises that there will be two holodeck missions—one Dixon Hill episode and one set in Worf's Klingon training arena. One mission will also take place outside the *Enterprise*, on the ship's hull.

In each of the missions, you will be given control of one *Enterprise* crew member, such as Picard or Data. However, you'll also have two other crew members along to help (the developers referred to them as "wingmen," an appropriate analogy). The game's control bar includes a mouse-driven command system for issuing

RECOGNIZE THIS? The entire game takes place aboard the Enterprise. The bridge is but one of the many familiar places you'll see.

THIS ISN'T THE ENTERPRISE! Ten missions will take place in the Holodeck. This all-yet-unexplored set means you'll be part of the Dixon Hill mission.

orders to your teammates. You can tell them to guard your rear, meet you at a specific location, patrol an area, or provide combat support in melee. This could be particularly useful when you need someone to watch your back while entering a secret area, or when you need added muscle when wading into a gauntlet of Borg.

However, since you are fighting the Borg, you or your teammates could be assimilated in mid-mission. When this happens, you have to mount a rescue mission to retrieve your teammate and deassimilate them in sick bay.

You Will Be Assimilated

The Borg were *Next Generation*'s most challenging enemies, and they're no different in First Contact. You'll fight three Borg types: engineers, fighters, and assimilators. They each have different AI; the fighter will rush at you as typical 3D shooter enemies do and try to overwhelm you with numbers, while assimilaters will hide in the shadows to sneak up behind you to assimilate you. The other type of Borg you will face is the Queen, who has reconstructed her body into a powerful fighting machine. You'll have to beat her twice during the course of the game, and, of course, the final confrontation with her will be the game's biggest challenge.

Aside from their powerful weapons, the Borg have the ability to adapt to your weapons. If you fire a phaser repeatedly at a Borg, they'll eventually become immune to that type of attack. To counter this, there will be various "phaser modulations" available throughout the game (not as power-ups, but as replicator-like units in the walls). When you remodulate your phasers, you'll once again be able to harm the Borg…at least until they adapt to your new weapon attack. Aside from your ever-present phaser, you'll also wield a phaser rifle, EMP grenades, and antinanite grenades. When you play Worf, you'll also get to use a Klingon *Bat'telh*.

Debriefings

Because the entire game takes place aboard the *Enterprise*, many of the locations made famous in the TV series will be available for you to adventure through. MicroProse says that we'll see the bridge, Eleven Forward (what used to be the bar Ten Forward aboard the *Enterprise-D*), the holodeck, warp core, Jeffries tubes, sick bay, the ready room, and the transporter room, as well as other locations.

Because so much of the ship will be rendered in 3D, MicroProse is also toying with the idea of offering a full ship's tour with the game that would allow Trek devotees to tour the virtual insides of the *Enterprise*.

MicroProse also has a few other goodies in mind for the final release, including deathmatch aboard the *Enterprise*. The draw here is that you can engage in phaser battles with your friends in the bridge and Jeffries tubes. Unfortunately, because of gameplay restrictions issued by Paramount (they don't let developers kill crew members or destroy the *Enterprise* in games), you won't be able to play as one of the crew.

Expect to see a much more visually striking game than Generations, since MicroProse is using the Unreal engine to create the 3D levels and environments. The characters, however, will be voxels: 3D pixels. This allows the design team, Visionary Media, to create more fluid and detailed characters, rather than the typically boxy polygons of other 3D shooters.

MicroProse is optimistic about releasing this game sometime this summer, but since the company has to wait for the Unreal engine to ship before it finalizes its game, this release date could slip. Despite this problem, though, what we've seen and heard looks promising. If Visionary Media and MicroProse stay on track, First Contact, with its story-driven, intelligent design, could have a bright future.

THE NEXT GENERATION Picard, Riker, Data, Worf, and all the other cast members will lend their voices to the game for the full Star Trek experience.

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Klingon Honor Guard

Gain a Warrior's Honor Through Conquest and Bloodshed

by Elliott Chin

Developer	MicroProse Hunt Valley
Publisher	MicroProse
Title	Next Generation
Genre	Action
Release Date	Q4 1998

Feel the hilt of the crescent-shaped *Bat'leth* in your hand. Taste the blood of puny humans as you squeeze the life out of their frail necks. Restore honor to the Klingon homeworld. Become a Klingon! MicroProse's KLINGON HONOR GUARD provides a visceral look at the more violent side of *Star Trek*.

KLINGON HONOR GUARD is first and foremost a pure 3D shooter. MicroProse assures us that this means plenty of violence, gore, blood, severed limbs, and vicious combat. We wouldn't expect any less from a game about the eternally warring Klingons. What MicroProse hopes will distinguish this game from the many other 3D shooters are its personality, story, and immersive *Star Trek* environment.

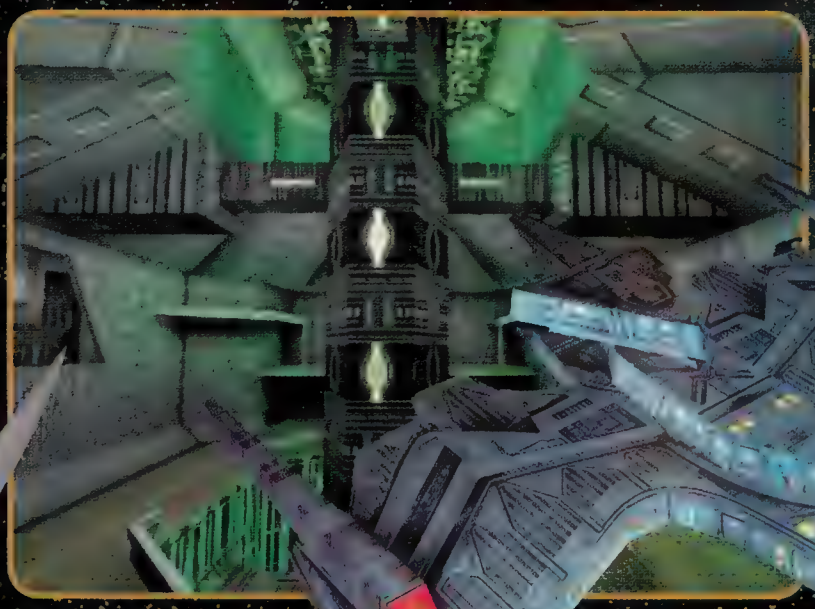
Your Continuing Missions

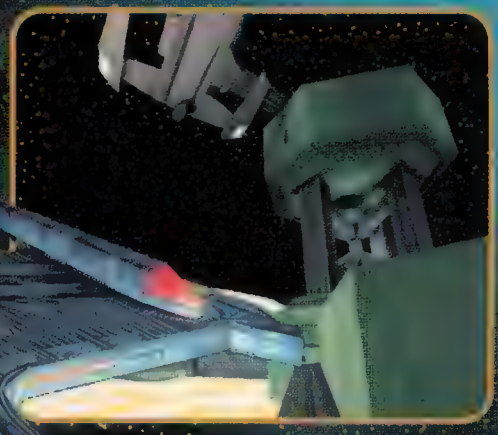
You play a member of the Klingon Honor Guard, the Klingon's version of our Navy Seals—Qo'noS' most respected and deadly elite soldiers. One of the Honor Guard's duties is to protect the Klingon emperor, and it's in this capacity that you enter the game. An assassination attempt has been made on the Klingon emperor, Gowron. The attack is thwarted, but Gowron orders the Honor Guard to track the killers and terminate them. You have been chosen to undertake this task. Although MicroProse is trying to keep the plot a little of a mystery, *Star Trek* fans will no doubt smell the machinations of the Duras sisters. How they survived their supposed death in *Star Trek: Generations* is something you'll discover while progressing through the game.

The game's intriguing story will be told in similar fashion to JEDI KNIGHT's, through cut-scenes that are interspersed between the levels. The levels themselves will fit nicely into the story and will include the innards of a battlecruiser, an ice world, a space station, and the Klingon capital, Qo'noS. There will be from 15 to 19 locations, though the game will be mission-based, not level-based.

Nonplayer characters will also appear in the game, both in mission briefings and within the game. Briefings will set up each mission and will be given to you by Kurn, Worf's brother on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Other NPCs who could show up in some capacity are Gowron and the Duras sisters. The plan is to wrap the faces of these characters onto their models and create functioning lips so that they can lip-sync their words. As for the enemies you could face during the course of the game, the plan is to include other Klingons, Andorians, droids,

AS THE KLINGON Honor Guard, you'll face many enemies, including other Klingons, and you'll travel to various locations, such as Qo'noS and the Klingon Battlecruiser.





and some nasty Klingon monsters.

The UNREAL engine will bring these worlds and characters to life, as it is being used to create the 3D levels, characters, and objects.

Klingon Grudge Matches

No 3D shooter would be complete without multiplayer support, and MicroProse intends for players to have some pretty wild deathmatches. There will be no explicit deathmatch levels, but MicroProse assures us that at least 7 of the game's 15 levels will be built with dual functionality. In addition to being used in the single-player campaign, they will have the appropriate sniping points and open gunfight areas to serve as raucous deathmatch levels. MicroProse does plan to offer support for clans, giving them access to different color skins and weapons so as to customize their look.

A Klingon-based first-person shooter seems like a game made in heaven. While the game design seems very solid, it's really too early in the development cycle to make more than preliminary judgments on how well the concept will translate into gameplay. MicroProse is promising to show us more in the coming weeks, which will allow us to write about this game in even more detail. Check out our in-depth preview on our sister site, *GameSpot*, at **www.gamespot.com/features/klingon.**

MICROPROSE WAS READYING A GRAPHICALLY ENHANCED BUILD OF THE GAME AS WE WENT TO PRESS. FOR AN IN-DEPTH PREVIEW OF THIS LATEST BUILD, VISIT *GAMESPOT* AT WWW.GAMESPOT.COM/FEATURES/KLINGON.

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Secret of Vulcan Fury

The Classic *Star Trek* As You've Never Seen It Before

by Jeff Green

Developer:	Trilat Systems
Publisher:	Interplay Productions
Era:	Original Series
Genre:	Adventure
Target Release Date:	Q1 1998

You're a Classic *Trek* fan. You have every one of the 70-plus episodes on tape, which isn't a big deal since you have them all memorized anyway. You watched *Next Generation* because it was there, but deep in your heart you knew that Kirk could take Picard any day of the week—and then steal his girlfriend. As for the rest of the *Star Trek* franchise: Forget it. Soap-opera drivel compared to the classic sci-fi morality plays of the original.

If this is you, then Interplay's upcoming STAR TREK: SECRET OF VULCAN FURY is more than just another computer game—it's an event. Due this August, VULCAN FURY is an attempt to create, in the form of an adventure game, a brand new "Classic *Trek*" episode, faithful in every respect to the '60s television series, with a storyline deeply immersed in *Trek* mythology.

To this end, Interplay enlisted two veterans of the original creative team to help with the game. The story and script are written by Dorothy (D.C.) Fontana, the author of a number of the original episodes (see sidebar) and one of the executive story editors for the TV series; the script for the game is being directed by John Meredyth Lucas, who directed and wrote original episodes as well. (For trivia buffs, Fontana and Lucas collaborated as writer/director on two classic episodes: "The Enterprise Incident" and "The Ultimate Computer.") In addition, all the original cast members voice-act their roles: William Shatner (Kirk), Leonard Nimoy (Spock), DeForest Kelley (McCoy), James Doohan (Scotty), George Takei (Sulu), Walter Koenig (Chekov), and Nichelle Nichols (Uhura). The special effects are about the only thing that won't be faithful to the series. In VULCAN FURY, they'll actually look good.

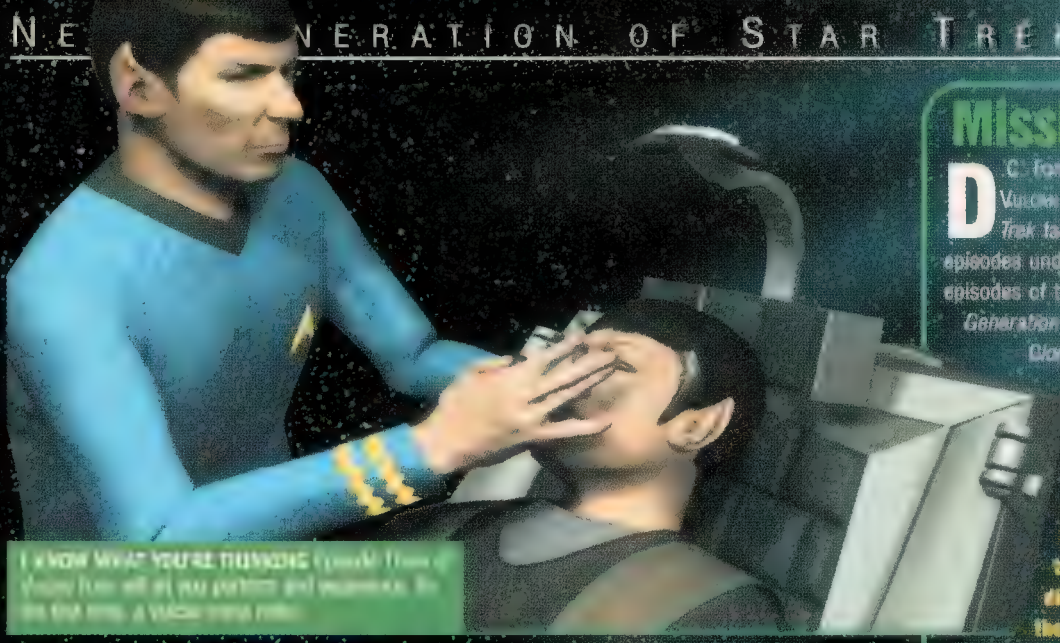
Race Wars

The story focuses on the mysteries involving the original separation of the Romulan and Vulcan races thousands of years before the era of the series. As the game opens, the crew of the U.S.S. *Enterprise* escorts an idealistic peacenik-type Romulan ambassador to Vulcan in the hopes of establishing a possible reunification of the races. Before talks can begin, however, the ambassador is found murdered. Although the evidence points to a Federation delegate, the *Enterprise* crew finds itself immersed in a much deeper plot.

This murder mystery is the first act of what Interplay says, as of this writing, will be a four-part game. In each part, you'll assume the role of various members of the crew for gaming experiences true to the nature of each character. The first act finds you primarily in the role of Dr. McCoy, in what is essentially a *Quincy*-like forensic mystery, though you'll also play as Kirk and Spock. From there, the game switches to an *Enterprise*-out-of-control scenario, which will require the efforts of Scotty (of course), as well as Sulu and Uhura. Next, in what is surely the game's most intriguing section, you'll play as Spock and experience a Vulcan mind meld firsthand. Finally, the game will wrap up with Kirk, Spock, and Chekov in a race-against-time mission to disarm the überweapon that is at the center of the whole story.

Phasers on Stunned

Interplay has made good *Trek* adventure games before (STAR TREK: 25TH ANNIVERSARY and STAR TREK: JUDGMENT RITES), but, graphically, VULCAN FURY is light years ahead of anything else the company has done. Developed by



I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. Spock's brow will do all the pointed and sarcastic lifting in the final, Vulcan mind meld.

Tribal Dreams, an in-house division of Interplay (also responsible for the upcoming OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS), VULCAN FURY eschews the static 2D screens and sprites of the previous games in favor of fluid camera movement and prerendered motion-captured models.

Tribal Dreams and director Lucas are storyboarding the entire game, choreographing every move, so that any action you take will have a cinematic feel to it. In addition, through the wonders of 3D animation, the team can execute shots that would have been impossible to pull off convincingly on the television show, such as a continuous overhead shot of the *Enterprise* that zooms from outside the hull all the way in to the crew on the bridge.

The motion-captured characters are nothing short of dazzling, prompting sighs of amazement from a group of normally jaded gaming journalists. Picture the cut-scenes from Westwood's BLADE RUNNER; now apply this level of quality to the entire game. Unlike BLADE RUNNER, SECRET OF VULCAN FURY does not switch to a different graphic model for gameplay—it continues to use the motion-captured characters throughout.

Interplay was still working on the characters' physical movements when we visited, smoothing out leg and arm movements and attempting to remove the robotlike stare of the eyes—a problem also seen in BLADE RUNNER—but other touches, such as the arching of Spock's eyebrows as he spoke, were incredibly lifelike. With Leonard Nimoy actually supplying the voice, the sensation of watching and listening to the motion-captured Spock proved to be eerily close to real life.

The game interface will also serve the developers' cinematic intentions, rather than get in their way. As in LucasArts' recent adventure games, the game controls will remain pretty much off-screen. If you click and hold the mouse on a person or object you can interact with, a list of possible actions will pop up. The rest of the time, the screen will be devoted exclusively to the game's beautiful graphics and animations.

A Fine Franchise

Computer games based on popular films and TV franchises are notoriously iffy propositions (see Interplay's own WATERWORLD for one prime example). But Interplay has a history of doing right by the *Star Trek* name—at least as far as adventure games go—and SECRET OF VULCAN FURY looks as if it will continue that tradition. Rather than simply plaster the *Star Trek* name onto a generic gaming experience, Interplay has fully immersed itself in the *Trek* culture to create an experience as close as possible to that of the classic television show. With cutting-edge 3D graphics and a deep storyline, it's easily one of the most anticipated adventure games of the year, even for those non-Trekkers among us.

DIGITAL HARPOCLS. Vulcan Fury's motion-captured characters provide some of the most lifelike computer graphics we've seen.

Mission Briefing

D.C. Fontana, the writer of classic *Star Trek* episodes such as "Journey to Babel" and "The Enterprise Incident," as well as episodes of the animated series, *Next Generation*, and a novel (*Vulcan's Glory*). We caught up with Fontana during our recent visit to Interplay and were able to ask her a few questions.

CGW: How was working on the script for Vulcan Fury different from writing one of the TV episodes?

Fontana: Most of it was really the same. The script went back and forth between me and [Tribal Dreams], as we adjusted dialogue to fit the game's puzzles, but mostly it was the same experience.

CGW: Did you have to keep writing new dialogue as Tribal Dreams came up with more puzzle branches?

Fontana: No—actually I wrote all the dialogue ahead of time for more branches than they ended up using.

CGW: Because of the computer animation, you were probably able to do a lot more than you were back in the '60s. Was there anything you wanted to do that Tribal Dreams told you wouldn't be possible?

Fontana: Other than the giant interstellar space battle? (*Laughing*) No.

CGW: What prompted you to do this particular story?

Fontana: I've always been a big Spock fan and I saw this as an opportunity to explore his heritage more, and to look at how the Vulcans and Romulans became who they are. It's a rich environment for a writer to explore.

CGW: Did you do any of the puzzle design yourself?

Fontana: I left that to those guys [Tribal Dreams].

CGW: Did you have to go back and watch old shows to prepare for writing this script?

Fontana: No. It's pretty much all still here in my head.

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Birth of the Federation

MicroProse Gives Birth to a *Star Trek* Strategy Game With Depth

by Terry "Red Shirt" Coleman

Developer: MicroProse Alameda

Publisher: MicroProse

Era: Next Generation

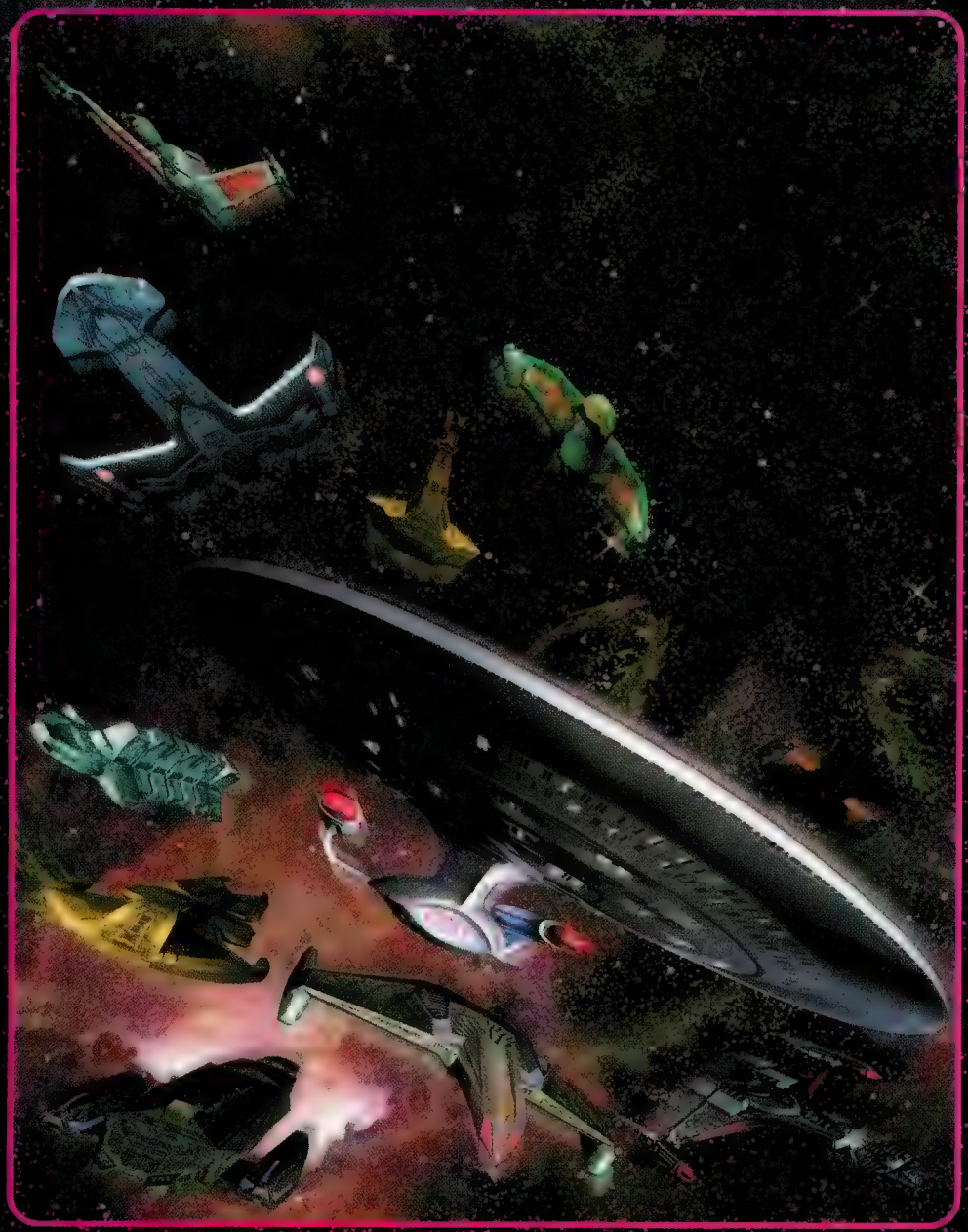
Genre: Turn-based Strategy

Target Release Date: Q4 1995

Let's be honest. Every gamer who's ever watched a faded episode of the original *Star Trek* harbors a strong desire to be Captain Kirk. (My fellow *CGW* editors will tell you I'm more like Dr. McCoy, but that's another story.) In particular, we want to go Supernova on the Klingons, and maybe tell the surly, arrogant Romulans that we don't care if they shut themselves off from the rest of the galaxy for a couple millennia.

For years, the only chance any of us actually had to fulfill this fantasy was either the old *Starfleet Battles* and related boardgames, or the simple, unlicensed, grid-based Trek game that popped up on every computer from 1970s mainframes to the Apple and C-64.

Now we can finally dive in with phasers firing. In BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION, not only do we get to run the Federation from the early days of transporters and badly synthesized food, but we also get to make the galaxy safe for the Klingon, Romulan, Ferengi, and Cardassian races. If some of these starfaring races don't jibe with your memory of classic *Star Trek*, it's because MicroProse doesn't have that particular *Trek* license (and it's doubtful that Interplay is in any mood to share). The advantage is that you get the major players in this centuries-long galactic drama, and the chance that you'll meet up with the Cardassians (or even the Ferengi) earlier than in "official" *Trek* history certainly will help replay value.



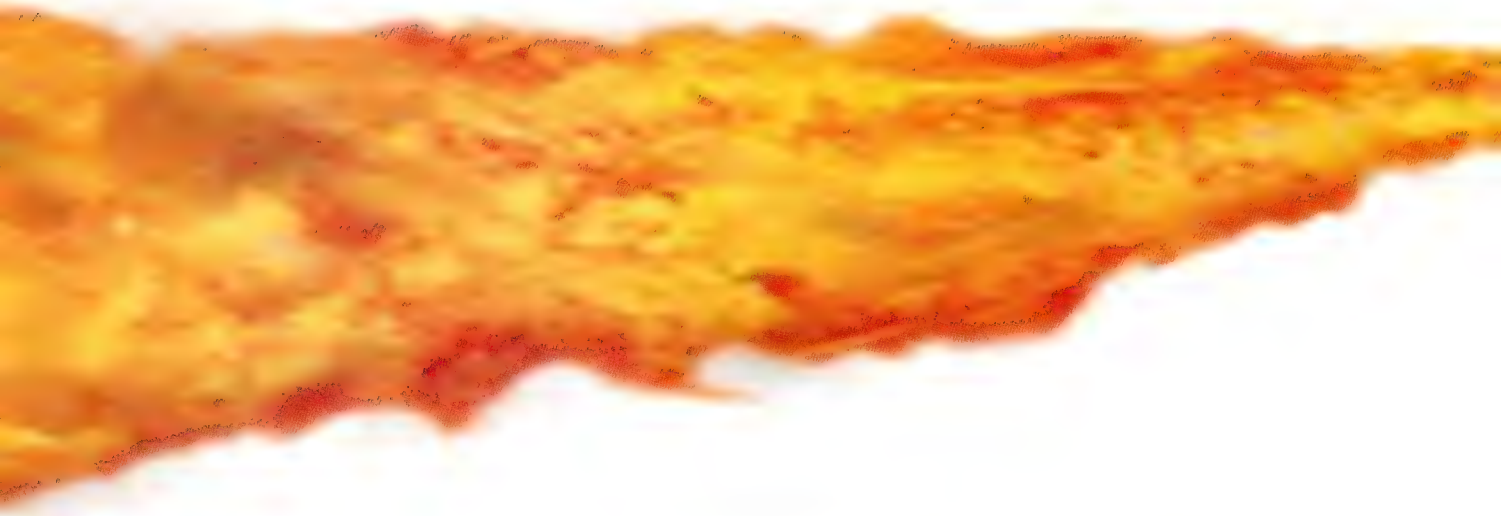
Galactic Addicts Apply Here

Simply put, BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION is a classic, galactic grand-strategy game in which you explore, expand your influence, and even exterminate your enemies (as needed), all according to the wonderfully quaint physics that exist only in *Star Trek*. BIRTH attempts to combine some of the diplomatic aspects of MASTER OF ORION with a dash of the depth of CIVILIZATION II, yet it also recalls the simple and addictive turn-based play of REACH FOR THE STARS.

In all games of this type, personality for the various races is a key, and with the rich *Trek* universe from which to draw, this should be one of BIRTH's strengths. The Klingons are, of course, militaristic, but they are also portrayed in the game as more honorable than the Cardassians (big surprise), with the latter prone to spying on everyone in the game—including allies. What's nice about BIRTH is that you are encouraged, but not forced, to play to your civilization's strengths, as laid out in *Trek* lore. If you want to portray the Federation as a group of bloodthirsty martinets who could make the Andorians seem tame, fine—just don't whine when you lose your diplomatic edge.

There are a lot of nice touches in the game's design. For example, you

Remember when
you used to
torture these guys?



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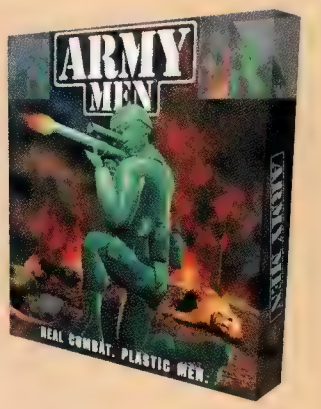

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ALL WARP ROUTES LEAD TO QO'NOS You conduct your civilization's explorations and trade routes on a screen much like that of REACH FOR THE STARS, complete with such touches as Klingonese calligraphy.

normally must be allied with another civilization to have Right of Passage through its territory. The Romulans, however, can occasionally cross borders, provided that they have no diplomatic ties with that civilization. This nicely simulates Romulan isolation without needlessly complicating the game. Similarly, the Ferengi will attempt to have trade routes to your star systems without allowing you to reciprocate—your basic black-market trading.

Unlike many turn-based games, BIRTH is designed for multiplay from the ground up (in addition to its Civ-like single-player game). You can vie for galactic dominance via TCP/IP, IPX, network, direct modem, serial hookup—even hotseat and email—and there's a search feature to help you find fellow warriors on the Net. Just about everything from starting tech levels (which include the shaky beginnings of Warp travel) to galaxy size and shape to the frequency and effect of random events can be toggled. Those who could never finish a full multiplayer campaign of MASTER OF ORION II will be happy to have scenarios in BIRTH that can be completed in an evening. On the other hand, grognards who want to play at a more leisurely pace via email can probably keep a game going longer than the original *Star Trek* series.

NAYSAYING NAGUS If the Ferengi ambassador is being difficult—as usual—you can ply him with credits, trade routes, commodities, and even intelligence info.

Giving Birth

Each turn, you prioritize research among various technologies: Biotech, Construction, Computer, Energy, Propulsion, and Weaponry. As you'd expect, each civilization has bonuses for different types of research, and each can build a unique "Wonder of the Galaxy" for better computer tech, more powerful phasers, or whatnot.

In addition, BIRTH lets you meet 30 minor races from *Trek* lore, each with its own unique ability. My favorite was the Bolian Cosmetology Center, which allows you to sprinkle barbers around the galaxy—resulting in an intricate spy network! Enticing the minor races to join your side becomes a game within a game (try getting the logical Vulcans to join the Klingon Empire), but it's still less involved than the diplomatic system of MOO II.

However, nothing will seem more streamlined to the veteran galactic gamer than the combat system. You don't spend hours tweaking your ship designs, as in MOO, nor do you micromanage fleets. In classic *Trek* fashion, you send your ship captains to an area and instruct them to Colonize, Patrol, Defend, or Attack, as appropriate.

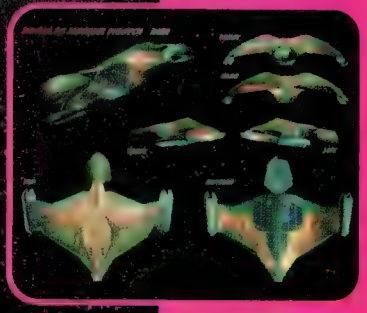
In a hostile situation, you have the option of letting the AI handle combat automatically, but it's very simple to manually fight the battle yourself. Basically, you give each ship an order—such as close and fire phasers, maneuver, release photon torpedoes, and so forth—with the option to change orders every turn. As with the rest of the game, flavor is everything, as the Cardassians maintain rigid formations, the Ferengi employ wolfpack tactics, and Federation fleets benefit from superior command control. While this style of combat lacks the joystick-jockey aspects of STARFLEET ACADEMY, it works well for fleet engagements (and if you're worried that combat won't be visceral enough for you, check out the sidebar).

Actually, the streamlined combat system is a good measuring stick for the rest of the design, because if you're expecting the next step beyond MOO II, you might very well be disappointed. But if you've always wanted to lose yourself among your favorite *Star Trek* icons, this is the only game in the galaxy. Now, if I can just find that blasted tricorder....

3D in a Turn-based Game?

BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION'S Task Force Mission Screen is clean but utilitarian, leaving you with the visual impression of a '90s version of the venerable TREK mainframe game.

Nevertheless, every ship used in the combat sequences is a detailed 3D model, just like the ones shown here—complete with authentic Federation, Klingon, Romulan, and other *Trek* insignia and markings. Combat is turn-based, but after decisions are made, battles play out in real-time using the FALCON 4.0 3D engine.



This is an actual shot of combat from the point of view of a Federation cruiser, where both it and the approaching Klingons are fully rendered 3D models. Not only can you zoom in and out during the battles, but Kirk wannabes can also save their triumphs as VCR-style files and send them to fellow Trekkies.

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Past Treks

A Look at Previous Journeys Into the *Star Trek* Universe

by Denny Atkin

Given that a random poll of my game-playing cohorts showed a *Star Trek* viewership rate of about 95 percent, it's no great surprise that *Trek* games have been popular since the dawn of personal computing.

Longtime gamers will remember the old grid-based *Star Trek* games, born on mainframes and quickly ported to early platforms such as the TRS-80, Vic-20, and Atari 400. As much an exercise in geometry as tactics, these games had you steering your ship around a 2D grid and fighting Klingons by figuring out the angle and distance to fire your phasers and torpedoes. A few commercial versions of this simple but fun tactical game existed, including the unlicensed STAR FLEET I, from Cygnus/Interstel. *CGW* called it "state-of-the-art for space games"—state of the art for 48K Ataris and 128K PCjrs, that is.

If you miss those simple days, check out this month's CG-ROM for a classic text-based *Trek* game from the late '80s. There are two versions; the editors actually prefer the all-text BEGIN 1.65 to the graphics-based BEGIN 2.

Commercial Treks

Licensed *STAR TREK* games got their start with ports of the coin-op arcade game for 8-bit computers, but we'll pass by those and the early all-text adventure games like THE KOBYASHI ALTERNATIVE. As with the first season of *Deep Space Nine*, most of those episodes are best forgotten.

One of the first good *Trek* games was Interplay's STAR TREK: 25th ANNIVERSARY, an adventure game that let you follow the original series crew (who, in lo-res VGA, took on a sort of Fisher-Price look) on a variety of related missions. Even better was the follow-up, STAR TREK: JUDGMENT RITES, which featured better writing and less hokey graphics. Although these games were released way back in 1992–93, they're still worth playing if you can find clearance copies of the CD-ROM versions.

Taking a leap in technology, we come to Spectrum Holobyte/MicroProse's STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, A FINAL UNITY. The first decent game based on the NCC-1701D crew (Prentice-Hall's 1989 CGA THE TRANSINIUM CHALLENGE was embarrassingly bad), this long-delayed adventure game had its share of problems, such as *way* too many artistic styles for one game. Still, a good plot and beautiful, if inconsistent, graphics make this worth picking up if you missed it the first time around.

MicroProse's bland follow-up, STAR TREK: GENERATIONS, wasn't as successful an effort. The game was never sure if it was a 3D shooter or an adventure game, graphics were mediocre at best, and sloppy controls and an abysmal save-game feature made for a second-rate game.

Interplay's STARFLEET ACADEMY is a mixed bag. Many gamers were disappointed in its WING COMMANDER-esque space combat, since early publicity billed the game as more of a starship bridge simulation. But while the space combat wasn't all that interesting, the missions in this game are among the best ever for capturing the atmosphere of the original *Star Trek*.

License to Kill

There are a number of *Trek* games that should be passed by even if you spot them in the bargain bin. Viacom's DEEP SPACE NINE: HARBINGER had a passable adventure storyline, but incongruous puzzles and annoying rail-shooter action sequences made it an exercise in frustration. Simon & Schuster Interactive's STAR TREK: BORG was a good argument for why full-motion video adventures don't work, while the company's STAR TREK: KLINGON was actually an interesting reference work on the Klingon empire with a shallow, uninteresting "game" element tacked on. Better to stick with the company's excellent reference-only works, such as the INTERACTIVE TECHNICAL MANUAL and the STAR TREK ENCYCLOPEDIA.

As for efforts to milk the license for everything that its worth, such as STAR TREK: PINBALL, we just say drop them into the transporter buffer and set it on scatter.

1. *Angle the front face of the mouse to open or close the club and set the curvature of the shot.*

2. *Pull the mouse back to take a backswing and determine the power of the swing.*

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Other Journeys

Other *Trek* Titles from the Resourceful to the Exploitive

by Allen Greenberg and Denny Atkin

There are a number of other *Trek*-based titles that don't fall into the category of traditional games, or that are based only peripherally on *Star Trek*. We sent our away team down to determine which were worth further exploration.

Memory Alpha

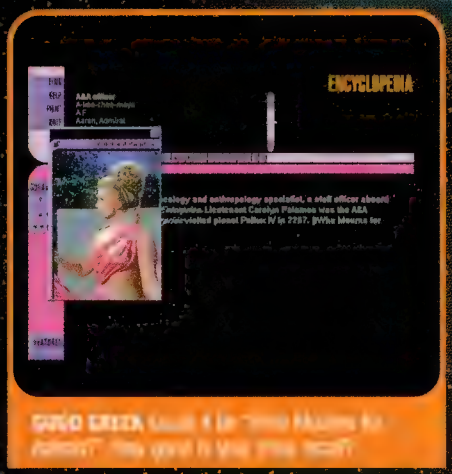
Back in the early days, before *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, it became obvious that *Star Trek* fanatics were severely afflicted with trivia-mania. Every iota of information became a pure gift from heaven. Now, three series and eight motion pictures later, trivia fanatics suffer from, if nothing else, an embarrassment of riches.

As per the late Gene Roddenberry's edict, someone has been keeping track of the details and chronology so that it actually fits together as a cohesive future history. THE STAR TREK ENCYCLOPEDIA from Simon & Schuster is not the first of its kind, but it certainly is the largest. The four-CD set completely covers the first two series, the first five seasons of *Deep Space Nine*, the first three seasons of *Voyager*, and all eight films. The encyclopedia features over 3,000 photos and more than 400 video clips, including every episode preview from *Deep Space Nine* and *The Next Generation*.

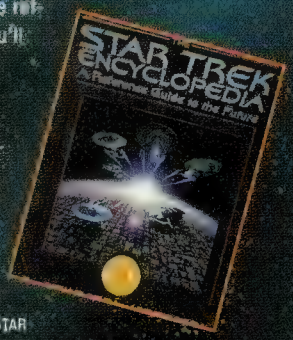
Of special note are slide show presentations, which cover such diverse subjects as *Star Trek*'s production history and the biographies of the two most well-known captains of the *Enterprise*. These features are elaborate and well worth the price of admission even if you are not interested in what you should do with your spith basil.

The volume is extensively cross-indexed, and users can also write their own articles or entries and insert them into the whole work. This is a treat to be sure for *Star Trek* fanatics.

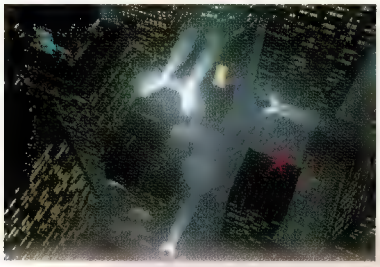
Another reference title, STAR TREK: THE CAPTAIN'S CHAIR, lets you explore the bridges of the *Enterprise-E*, the *Voyager*, the *Defiant*, the *Enterprise-D*, and the original *Enterprise* using QuickTime VR. While it's an interesting title for die-hard *Trek* fans, there's not much here to hold your interest long-term. The earlier STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION INTERACTIVE TECHNICAL MANUAL has a similar QuickTime VR replica of the *Enterprise-D*'s bridge, but also is packed with meaty information from Rick Sternbach and Mike Okuda's print *ST:TNG Technical Manual*. You can find this title as part of the STAR TREK GIFT SET, which also contains the OMNIPEDIA (an earlier version of the ENCYCLOPEDIA mentioned above) and the KLINGON LANGUAGE LAB.



Pseudo Games

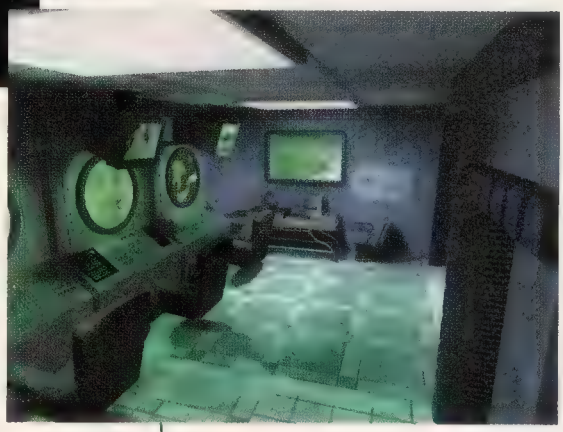


Along with the reference titles, you'll also find a few games that are based in some way around *Star Trek*, but don't really take place in the *Trek* universe. Two recent efforts include STAR TREK: THE GAME SHOW, reviewed in this issue's Classics/Puzzles section, and Interplay's STAR TREK PINBALL. This lackluster title includes two traditional pinball tables (think Pinball with *Trek* sound samples repeated to the point of annoyance) and a somewhat innovative two-player, six-flipper table called Nemesis. But the *Trek* license is gratuitous here, and there are much better pinball games available.



Actual screen captures from Tex Murphy: Overseer

Real Life PALES *by Comparison*



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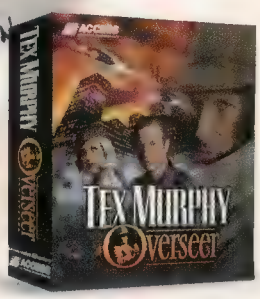

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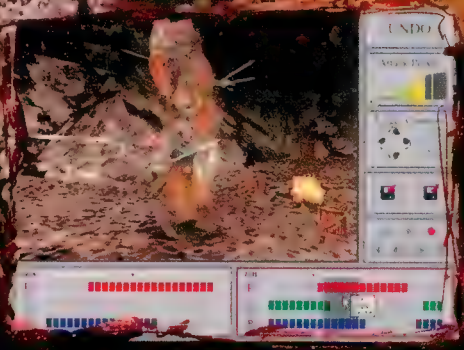

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CGW SCOOP

nVidia Aims High

This Single 2D/3D Chip Could Outperform Two 3Dfx Voodoo² Cards

by Dave Salvator and Loyd Case

Chip manufacturer nVidia has revealed new technology that could deliver significant breakthroughs in 3D performance and compatibility. The company showed *CGW* how its upcoming RIVA TNT chip may do in 1998 what its RIVA 128 did last year: Reshape much of the landscape of PC graphics. The TNT is still in the prototype phase, and we weren't able to verify nVidia's claims by testing production versions, but we thought we'd report what looks to be an important development in 3D graphics.

Like the RIVA 128, the TNT is a 2D/3D chip designed as a single solution for gamers. The 128 featured very fast 2D and equally impressive 3D. Though marred by two image-quality issues—both of which have, by and large, been corrected—the 128 has become the 2D/3D darling of the day, finding homes in systems from Dell, Micron, and Gateway, as well as onto boards from more makers than we have room to list.

The TNT is similar to the 128 in several respects. First, it uses the brute force approach to 3D graphics performance, using 5.5 million transistors, nearly as many as are found in a Pentium II (the 128 has about 3.3 million, similar to a Pentium.) And, like the 128, the TNT is specifically designed to accelerate Microsoft's Direct3D, though the TNT is targeted toward the upcoming DirectX 6.0. The capabilities necessary for stellar D3D performance make for a potentially stunning OpenGL part as well. And since D3D and OpenGL are the two "run on almost any chip" APIs of choice, there shouldn't be any compatibility issues with the TNT. So how does it work? We'll take you through the chip's design and explain what it means for games and gamers.

IF ONE IS GOOD...

Perhaps the TNT's most impressive feature isn't a feature at all, but rather the architecture itself. The TNT doesn't have just one rendering engine, it has two. And it's this twin-engine design that may make the TNT the chip to beat in 1998, most likely outpacing Intel's new i740 and maybe even 3Dfx's venerable Voodoo² chipset. The TNT's aggressive design goals call for a fill rate of 200Mpixels/sec with the capacity to handle up to six million triangles per second. To give you an idea how fast this is, the TNT's projected fill rate is faster than *two* Voodoo² boards connected together using 3Dfx's SLI technology.

How does the TNT plan on delivering this lofty level of performance?

The TNT needs a constant stream of data to feed it, so the TNT's architects have tuned the prefetch queue to the point where there's very little dead time, provided the system is feeding data to the graphics pipeline. They call this "perfect prefetch." The prefetcher is coupled to a single 4KB vertex cache, which feeds twin processors that incorporate both a full floating-point setup engine and a pixel engine that handles all the per-pixel operations. Next, each pixel processor feeds an effects processor that handles the lighting, shading, and applying of textured pixels to polygons. Also feeding into the effects processor is an 8KB texture cache. These then feed a single, constant-velocity FIFO (First-In, First-Out) queue, which acts as a buffer between the dual rendering engines and the frame buffer. At the back end, the TNT's 128-bit memory interface is asynchronous, so local memory—SGRAM most likely running at 200MHz—can be faster than the TNT's own clock rate, which is currently planned to be 100MHz. Other features include a 250MHz RAMDAC for high refresh rates at high resolutions, up to 16MB of local memory, and full AGP 2x functionality including AGP texturing. For an even more detailed map of the TNT's twin-engine design, you can follow along step-by-step with the lovely and talented diagram on the next page.

I CAN DO THAT

As for features, TNT supports **per-pixel MIP mapping** (terms in red are defined in the "3D Terms" sidebar on the next page) and now supports **anisotropic filtering**, a method for filtering textures along one axis. The TNT will likely use this anisotropic filtering to generate **trilinear MIP mapping** effects, which will make for more refined texture filtering and less blurriness.

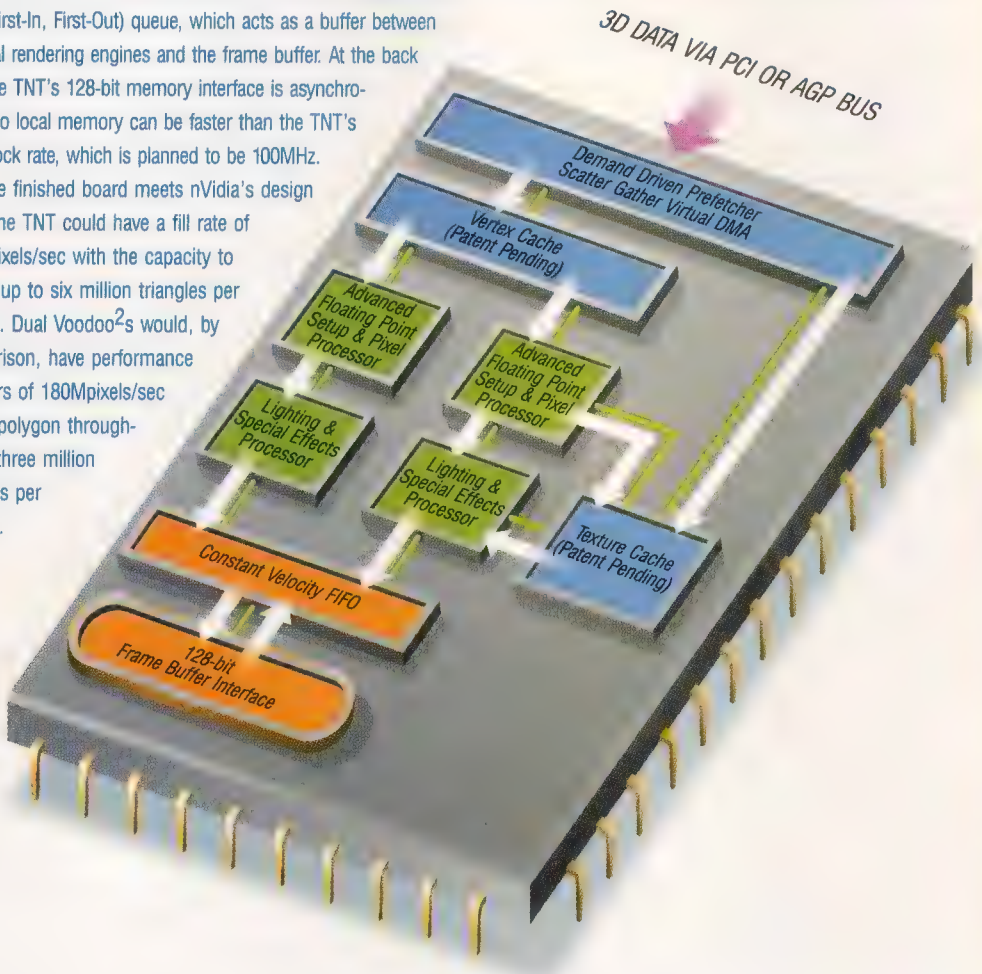
Operations are now all 32-bit, including 32-bit Z-buffer, in which operations are calculated with 24-bit precision and the last eight bits are used for stencil buffering, a feature supported in both Direct3D 6.0 and OpenGL. In fact, all rendering operations are now 32-bit. Say you're running a game that operates in 16-bit color, then the dithering from 32- to 16-bit color would be the final operation. On the API front, the TNT fully supports DirectX 6.0, including **bump mapping**, multitexturing, and **stencil buffering**. The TNT will also arrive with an OpenGL ICD, so any games written to that API should also find a happy home on TNT.

What does all this lingua techna mean in English? There are two complete rendering engines on the chip that can work in parallel. The twin rendering engine has the potential to perform faster than a Voodoo²—with more features. Also, nVidia claims the TNT will handle multitexture operations—DirectX 6.0's most prominent new feature that speeds lighting and other texture effects—in a single pass.

3D Architecture of the RIVA TNT

TWIN-ENGINE DESIGN This diagram shows the data flow through the TNT's 3D rendering processor. 3D data from the system bus is anticipated by the "prefetcher," which tries to keep the twin rendering engines working at peak efficiency. The prefetcher is coupled to a vertex cache, which stores positions of the corners of the polygons; the vertex cache feeds parallel processors that perform full floating-point calculations and per-pixel operations. Next, each pixel processor feeds an effects processor that handles the lighting, shading, and applying of textured pixels to polygons. Also feeding into the effects processor is an 8KB texture cache. These then feed a single, constant-velocity FIFO (First-In, First-Out) queue, which acts as a buffer between the dual rendering engines and the frame buffer. At the back end, the TNT's 128-bit memory interface is asynchronous, so local memory can be faster than the TNT's own clock rate, which is planned to be 100MHz.

If the finished board meets nVidia's design spec, the TNT could have a fill rate of 200Mpixels/sec with the capacity to handle up to six million triangles per second. Dual Voodoo^{2}s would, by comparison, have performance numbers of 180Mpixels/sec with a polygon throughput of three million triangles per second.



GENTLEMEN, WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY

What's the first thing a game developer does with any new piece of hardware? Simple, throw enough work at it to try to bring to its knees. Needless to say, developers should have a lot of fun trying to make the TNT sweat. The result? Games with higher polygon counts, more textures, multitexturing effects, and, perhaps most notably, higher resolutions (how does QUAKE II at 1024x768 grab you?). The biggest thing the TNT has going for it is the Ginsu effect: This single chip should cut through just about anything—Direct3D, OpenGL, 2D, and digital video.

Given that RIVA 128 chips have found homes in most of the top-tier system makers' boxes, not to mention a bevy of board makers, the TNT already has a foot in the door. So if the TNT can provide this unprecedented level of performance, it will also most likely ship millions of units over its lifetime. This is good news for Direct3D and OpenGL, because in the TNT they will most likely have a powerhouse performer. Companies that have leveraged games onto their own chips by offering proprietary APIs—3Dfx's Glide, PowerVR's SGL, and Rendition's RRedline—may begin to see more title developers writing to Direct3D first and to their APIs second (if at all). Of course, the 3D-chip house is still pretty crowded, and other chip makers, such as Rendition, 3Dfx, 3DLabs, ATI, VideoLogic/NEC, Matrox, and, yes, S3, all have new silicon in the works to keep themselves competitive.

In bringing the TNT to market, the crew at nVidia has laid out for themselves a daunting task. To produce the TNT, they're changing manufacturing facilities and still need to get a fab line (where chips are produced) up and running. But if they succeed, and other chip makers can't deliver at least comparable performance soon after the TNT begins shipping later this year, then nVidia may be 1998's big winner.

3D TERMS

Per-Pixel MIP Mapping: A distance-based technique for keeping texture maps from distorting. Rather than keeping a single copy of a texture map, the renderer keeps several. As you get closer to an object, the rendering engine swaps in a different, higher-resolution version of the texture map. As you move away, the renderer swaps a lower-resolution texture map onto the object.

Trilinear MIP-Mapping: A filtering technique by which the renderer takes one pixel, its four neighboring pixels, and the four neighboring pixels from the nearest MIP map, and takes the weighted average of those color values before drawing the pixel.

Anisotropic Filtering: An advanced filtering method that produces less texture distortion when the texture is viewed from an angle. This is the next level of filtering beyond Trilinear Filtering.

Bump Mapping: Adds a raised, 3D tactile "texture" to a texture map.

Stencil Buffering: Used for special effects, including soft and hard shadows from multiple light-sources.

REMEMBER HOW THEY SAID:

TECHNOLOGY WOULD TAKE WARFARE OUT OF THE TRENCHES?

THEY WERE WRONG.

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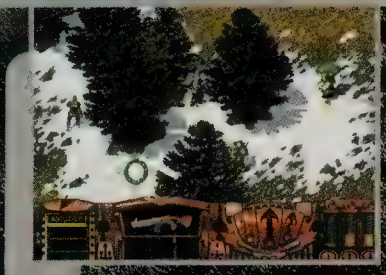

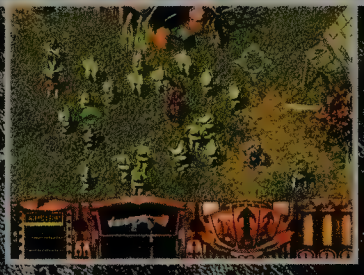

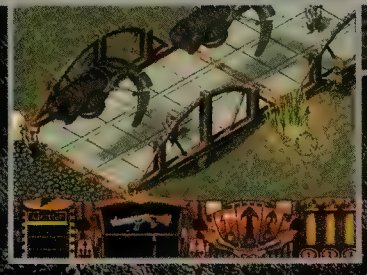

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Decisions, Decisions

Should Windows 98 or NT 5 Be Your Next Operating System?

By the time you read this, it's possible that Windows 98 is actually shipping. And the 64-megabyte question is...should you upgrade?

If you're running either the original version of Windows 95 or Windows 95 OSRI (service release 1), then the answer is a resounding Yes! If nothing else, the addition of FAT32, the high-capacity file system, makes Windows 98 a good upgrade. Windows 98, unlike Windows 95 Service Release 2, comes with a FAT32 converter, so you can convert to the newer file system without having to back up and reformat your system (or buy a partitioning tool like Partition Magic).

Most of the other additions in Windows 98 revolve around user interface enhancements, performance improvements, and bug fixes.

Windows 98's user interface is much like that of Windows 95 with Internet Explorer 4.0 layered on top. The good news is that it's a little faster with Active Desktop turned on than is Windows 95. The bad news is that Active Desktop still sucks CPU cycles like they were free lemonades on a sweltering day. For best gaming performance, you probably will still want to turn off Active Desktop.

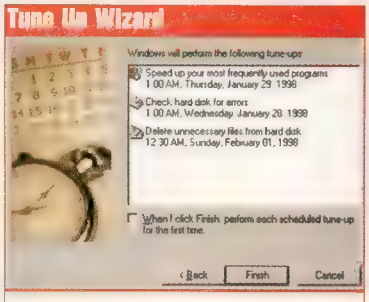
Most Windows 95 games seem to run fine on Windows 98, although a few don't. JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER didn't run until I applied the 1.1 patch. DirectX 5.0 is part of the operating system in Windows 98. Since it's very likely that full DirectX 6.0 games will be rare this Christmas, DirectX 5.0 won't be obsolete out of the box, as DirectX 3 was with Windows 95 OSR2.

There are some other good things, too. USB support is fully implemented in Windows 98, as is IEEE 1394 (a.k.a. FireWire). Intel's 440BX chipset supports both hardware standards, though you will be hard-pressed to find many FireWire peripherals yet. It's my guess, though, that when Windows 98 ships, USB peripherals will magically appear on store shelves everywhere. Even then, USB controllers may be problematic until most of the world upgrades to DirectX 6.0 (they won't work in DirectX 5.0).

Another cool item for Windows 98 users is the Tune Up Wizard, which consolidates several useful performance-enhancement features into a single, easy application. The new Defrag tool now monitors your hard-disk usage and will move your most frequently used programs to a single location on your hard drive, which speeds up access.

One other big enhancement in Windows 98 is the new Windows Driver Model (WDM). WDM is the shape of future drivers, since both Windows 98 and Windows NT 5.0 will support it.

SOME NEW, SOME OLD The Win 98 start-up screen. It looks pretty much like Windows 95 with IE 4 and Active Desktop.


Tune Up Wizard
Windows will perform the following tune-ups:
Speed up your most frequently used programs
1:00 AM, Thursday, January 29, 1998
Check hard disk for errors
1:00 AM, Wednesday, January 28, 1998
Delete unnecessary files from hard disk
12:30 AM, Sunday, February 01, 1998
When I click Finish, perform each scheduled tune-up for the first time.
< Back
Finish
Cancel

OFF TO SEE... The Tune Up Wizard consolidates useful tools in a single place.

NT DREAMS

If you're running Windows 95 OSR2, the burning question is: Should you move to Windows 98 or wait for Windows NT 5?

Windows NT 4 had limited DirectX support, but getting hardware drivers for DirectX was problematic. Windows NT 5 supports the WDM driver model, and can use the same drivers as Windows 98 (assuming there is a WDM driver).

> **"And the 64-megabyte question is... should you upgrade your OS?"**

Microsoft has announced that Windows 98 is the last of the Windows 9x family, though the company promises to continue to support releases for several more years. Yet the boys in Redmond have also said that Windows NT 5.0 isn't really the "consumer" version of NT.

Still, the NT kernel is much more stable than Windows 9x, and NT is a full protected-mode operating system, meaning NT can shrug off application crashes that would otherwise take down Windows 95 or 98.

It's also possible that some Windows 95 games won't run well (or at all) on NT 5.0. Also, almost no DOS games will run on Window NT, so if you have favorite DOS titles, you at least want to be able to dual boot back to Windows 95.

Until we have more definitive data comparing the two operating systems, gamers should hold off upgrading to Windows NT 5. We'll test the new OS here at *CGW* and give you a report when we have some solid results.

CG TECH TIPS

Here at *CGW*, we generally recommend external modems—they're much easier to configure than internal modems and don't take up a slot. However, their performance can be slower than an internal modem, especially if the modem is using its own internal compression. For gameplay, you normally want to turn off compression, but for Web access and file transfers, compression is a godsend, as it speeds things up a lot. However, the good ol' PC serial port in most current-generation PCs is limited to 115Kbits/sec (that's kilo*bits*). Since the modem may be decompressing incoming compressed data on the fly, it often has to pause for the serial port to catch up. In fact, compressed files coming in at 28.8Kbits/sec can sometimes reach 500Kbits/sec after decompression.

USB will certainly help solve the problem in the future, but meanwhile one possible answer is a faster serial port. Luckily for us, the serial-port wizards at Pacific Commware (www.turbocom.com) offer their TurboExpress 920, which can reach a sustained transfer rate of 920Kbits/sec. If you have an external 56K or ISDN modem, then you owe it to yourself to check out the TurboExpress 920. On my own 3COM ImpactIQ external ISDN modem, I've reached file-transfer throughput of more than 10KB/sec (kilo*bytes* per second), compared with around 8.5KB/sec before the upgrade. Head over to the Turbocom Web site and check it out.

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32X EIDE variable speed CD-ROM drive
Diamond Viper V330 128-bit AGP 3D video with 4MB SGRAM
32 voice Wavetable stereo sound, Advent 009 speakers with subwoofer
56Kbps x2 data/fax modem*
104-key enhanced keyboard
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82440LX chip set
512KB internal cache, 2MB BIOS
Integrated 100MB Iomega Zip drive
3.5" floppy
DVD-ROM drive and PCI decoder card
Diamond Viper V330 128-bit AGP 3D video with 4MB SGRAM
56Kbps x2 data/fax modem*
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Microsoft IntelliMouse, USB connections
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★★★★½ **REVIEW • THRUSTMASTER FLIGHT PACK**

Flight System Soars

by Loyd Case

Flight-sim aficionados generally agree that a HOTAS (hands on throttle and stick) controller setup, with separate stick, throttle, and rudder pedals offers, the greatest level of realism when you're strapped into your virtual cockpit.

ThrustMaster fills the low-cost controller void with its Flight System. At first, $150 seems like a lot, but for your hard-earned cash, you get a joystick, programmable throttle, and rudder pedals.

The least appealing part of the system is the joystick. The Flight Pack uses the trusty Top Gun, a two-thirds-size version of the original ThrustMaster FCS. Modeled after the stick in the 1960s F-4 Phantom air superiority fighter, it's capable, though unexciting. The Elite rudder pedals superficially resemble ThrustMaster's RCS, but are smaller and take up less space under your desk. The feel is a little stiffer, but I found the pedals somewhat easier to control and less fragile than the RCS.

The star of the show is the new Attack Throttle, which uses Thrusty's patented DirectConnect technology. This allows the throttle to pass keyboard inputs through the game port. That's right, no more keyboard pass-through connectors! This feature alone is worth a few cheers.

The throttle has four buttons and a three-way toggle. You can use the toggle as discrete buttons or to toggle states for the four main buttons, giving you up to 12 commands.

The programming utility is simple and straightforward. There are also very noticeable idle and afterburner detents. The buttons on the throttle felt just a bit cheesy, but they worked well. The only downside is that all the documentation is electronic.

The nice thing about the Flight System is that it's quite simple, so if you've been intimidated by the TQS or Saitek's X-36 gear, give this one a look. If you don't like the Top Gun stick, you can get the pedals and throttle separately, since the Attack Throttle software will program any standard four-button stick.

Price: $149
Manufacturer:
ThrustMaster
(503) 615-3200
www.thrustmaster.com

APPEAL: Flight-sim jockeys who are looking for a simple, low-cost HOTAS setup.

PROS: Simple, easy to use, easy to program; no keyboard pass-through; relatively low cost.

CONS: Throttle buttons feel a bit chintzy; Top Gun stick does not measure up.

CG LABS RATED ★★★★½

★ **REVIEW • 3D STRIKER**

3D Strikeout

by Dave Salvator

Gamers have seen a lot of oddball controllers come down the pike over the past year or so. Most tried to allow gamers a different way to mouse-look in first-person shooters, or tried to make six-degrees-of-freedom in games like DESCENT less cumbersome. After some awkward learning, most partially achieved the desired effect. Well, say hello to one that achieves a different effect: uselessness. This turkey, called the 3D Striker, was brought to market by QuickShot, a maker of various peripherals including some decent multimedia speakers.

Where to begin? Well, start with a badly translated manual that includes such gems as: "moving the 3D handle and place your comment with the ergonomic keyboard at the same time." (I'm not making this up.) The 3D Striker is termed a "digital gaming keyboard," and connects to your PC's keyboard port. No messy joystick plug to mess with. Of course, this means the 3D Striker can only input keystrokes and, despite having a fairly comfortable joystick, can't really perform joystick duties.

Now we move on to 3D Striker's configuration utility, such as it is. The DOS-based utility has preset configurations for about a dozen games, all of them DOS titles. Apparently, this whole Windows 95 gaming thing isn't really worth supporting yet. This utility also preselects the sound card the DOS title will use. Here's where it gets weird (okay, weirder): Despite having these dozen or so preconfigured settings for specific DOS titles, you can't reprogram the 3D Striker's buttons. They're all hard-wired to enter specific keystrokes. I scoured the documentation—all six pages of it—to see if there was something I had missed. There wasn't.

The 3D Striker works as advertised. The only problem is, it works as advertised. This one's an early contender for *CGW*'s hardly coveted 1998 Doorstop of the Year award, and may actually already have the award sewn up.

If you like to slow down at car accidents to take a look, then check this guy out. Otherwise, move along, folks; there's nothing to see here.

Price: $69.99 (with software bundle).
Manufacturer:
QuickShot Technologies
Milpitas, CA
(408) 263-4163
www.quickshot.com

APPEAL: Uh, anyone looking for a more comfortable set of number keys in a row.

PROS: Fairly comfortable (but almost useless) joystick handle; lovely cloth palm rest.

CONS: Too many to list.

CG LABS RATED ★

Cyberstuff Catches Some Air

by Loyd Case

It's not too often that a new technological innovation impresses me simply because it works, but the CyberStik did. Here's a joystick without potentiometers. It senses the movement of the axes and communicates those changes to the game port. You can sort of hold it in the air, wave it around, and the game reacts. In fact, the only moving parts are the switches themselves.

You can use the CyberStik as a quasi-standard controller by attaching it to the weighted base that ships with the stick. The base serves only to anchor the stick; while there is a moving pivot point, it doesn't affect the joystick signal in any way. CyberStuff suggests using the base to calibrate the stick.

In its base mode, the CyberStik emulates the CH Flightstick Pro. Instead of a throttle slider, there's a forward/reverse switch on the top of the stick that increases or decreases the throttle response. There's also an LED on top of the stick that indicates whether you're in digital or analog mode.

The stick worked very well with several driving games I tested. Flight sims worked okay, though it's certainly not the height of verisimilitude. I didn't have much luck with 3D shooter games, though—it was hard not to overshoot the target in HEAVY GEAR or JEDI KNIGHT. The CyberStik does work with rudder pedals or an analog throttle, though why you'd do that is open to question.

The real bummer with the CyberStik, though, is its shape. There were sharp edges around the front of the stick (ostensibly finger indentations), but I found them fatiguing in extended gameplay. If you hold the stick with both hands—sort of like a Mel Gibson with a Glock 10—then it's less tiring.

The CyberStik's real market may lie with portable gaming. Lugging a joystick along with a laptop is a real nuisance, but the CyberStik may be just the ticket. For everyday gaming, though, its distinctive shape may be its Achilles heel.

APPEAL: Gamers who like big gestures; gamers on the go with laptop computers.

PROS: It works; in driving and flying games, control is easy.

CONS: The grip gets tiring quickly; the novelty wears off soon.

CG LABS RATED ★★★

Price: $79
Vendor: CyberStuff
Richmond, VA
(804) 330-5970
www.cyberstuff.com

Don't Touch That Dial

by Dave Salvator

For gamers, it seems the Universal Serial Bus (USB) has, so far, been one of those Godot-type technologies. You know, the one that's been hyped to death, but you're left waiting, and waiting and...well, you get the idea. There have been a few gaming devices shipped using USB, with quite a few more in the works.

Well, Altec-Lansing has come up with an interesting use of USB, and in a pretty unlikely place: speakers. We've heard some pretty tall claims about USB speakers replacing the sound card as we know it, but don't throw away that SoundBlaster just yet. Altec's 305s don't use USB to send an actual signal; rather, they let you finely control the speakers' imaging and volume settings.

Installation was a bit vexing. The installation CD doesn't include an INF file for Windows 95 to read when the 305s are detected as a new device. Instead, you must cancel out of the auto-detect sequence and run the speakers' setup program. On reboot, Windows 95 discovered the 305s again and used the newly installed driver.

Altec's USB-GUI software lets you select three imaging modes: Stereo, Dolby ProLogic, and Dolby AC-3 (Dolby Digital). Apparently you need to have an AC-3 encoder in the system for AC-3 to be a selectable option. The 305's satellites each have side-firing drivers to help create "phantom" speakers when you choose ProLogic or AC-3 mode, and the USB-GUI software lets you tweak individual volume levels, including the side-firing drivers. Curiously absent are any controls for EQ (bass/treble), aside from a subwoofer volume fader.

The 305s sound quite good, with very solid bass and clean midrange and high-end imaging. The big downside is that anytime you tweak even the volume on the 305s, you toggle out of your game, and Altec's USB applet comes up to show you the volume change you're making.

If you just have to put those USB ports to good use, the 305s will fill the bill and sound terrific, provided you don't need to make any volume changes midgame. But if you like smooth gameplay during volume tweaks, the 305s are not your optimal choice.

APPEAL: Audiophiles hell-bent to get some use out of their USB ports.

PROS: Solid overall audio quality; USB controls work well.

CONS: Any volume tweak during gameplay brings the game to a screeching halt.

CG LABS RATED ★★

Price: $199
Vendor: Altec-Lansing
Milford, PA
800-258-3288
www.altecmm.com

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★★★½☆ REVIEW • OUTLAW 3D

Jazz Hits a High Note

by Loyd Case

If you're looking for a full-featured 2D/3D accelerator with widespread software support and good performance, you won't have to look much further than the Jazz Outlaw 3D. It won't win awards as the fastest 2D or 3D card out there, but it does the job at a surprisingly low price. We took a look at a 4MB AGP version of the Outlaw 3D, which uses Rendition's V2200 accelerator, the big brother of the chip used in Diamond's Stealth II. The V2200 is not a full AGP part; it doesn't take advantage of AGP textures, nor does it support 2x sideband addressing. In reality, an AGP V2200 card is a PCI part running at 66MHz. Given those constraints, our testing revealed the Outlaw to be a solid, but not outstanding Direct3D performer. However, it does support Rendition's RRedline 3D API, which some game developers have supported. We also took a look at some beta OpenGL minidrivers capable of running GL QUAKE. The 3D WinBench score on a 266MHz Pentium II came in at 364, comparing favorably to the 3Dfx-equipped Pure3D, which weighted in at 379 on the same system. The games we looked at performed well, too. GL QUAKE ran at around 25 frames per second (the average of time-demos 1, 2, and 3). Direct3D titles fared well also. The 2D Windows performance was pretty solid, posting a score of 104, barely shy of current RIVA numbers.

Overall, the Outlaw 3D looks to be a solid, low-cost 3D accelerator that would be a great complement to a Voodoo2 board. Although it doesn't support full AGP functionality, that's probably not a serious factor for another 6–12 months. At a street price of under $140, it's an appealing card for those on a budget who are looking for good performance and Rendition support.

Price: $140 (street).
Manufacturer: Jazz Multimedia
(408) 764-2306
www.jazzmm.com

APPEAL: Gamers looking for a low-cost PCI or AGP V2200 board.

PROS: Low cost; solid performance in both 2D and 3D; supports OpenGL, Direct3D, and Rendition RRedline.

CONS: Not quite the best performer around.

CG LABS RATED ★★★½

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This Month's Reviews

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Andretti Racing	★★½	184
Balls of Steel	★★★½	158
Battlespire	★★	166
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Carmaggedon Splat Pack	★★★	154
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Evolution	★½	195
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Magic: Duels of the Planeswalkers	★★	190
Monty Python's Meaning of Life	★★	197
Redneck Rampage: Suckin' Grits	★★	162
Star Trek: The Game Show	★★	198
Subspace	★★★	154
Tanarus	★★½	151
Virus	★½	162
VR Baseball	★★½	180
X-Men Total Quake Conversion	★★½	142

"BEYOND TIME wants to be MYST really, really bad and gets this about half right—it's really, really bad."

—Robert Coffey, reviewing BEYOND TIME

HOW DO WE RATE?

We review only finished products, not prerelease versions. The ratings are as follows:

★★★★★ **Outstanding:** The rare game that gets it all right. The graphics, sound, and gameplay come together to form a Transcendent Gaming Experience. Our strongest buying recommendation.

★★★★ **Very Good:** A high-quality game that succeeds in many areas. It may have minor problems, but is still worth your money, especially if you're interested in the subject matter or genre.

★★★ **Average:** A mixed bag. It can be a game that reaches for the stars, but falls short in several ways. It can also be a game that does what it does well, but lacks flair or originality.

★★ **Weak:** A game with serious problems. Usually buggy, seriously lacking in play value, or just a poorly conceived game design—you should think long and hard before buying it.

★ **Abysmal:** The rare game that gets it all wrong. This is reserved for those products so buggy, ill-conceived, or valueless that you wonder why they were ever released in the first place.

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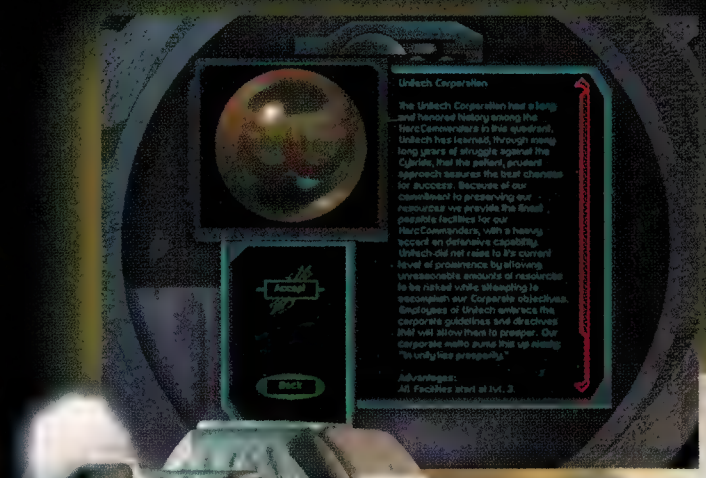

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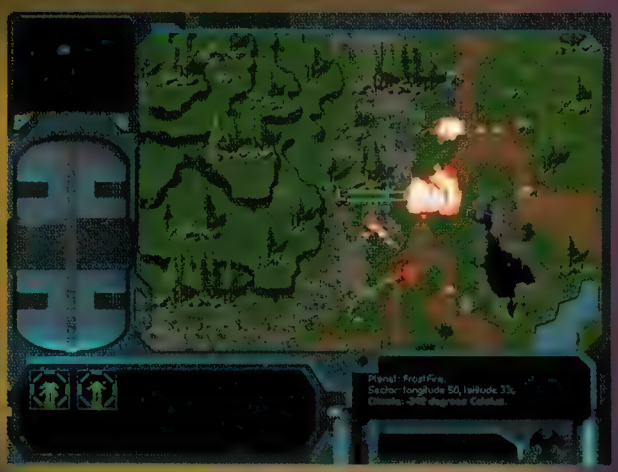

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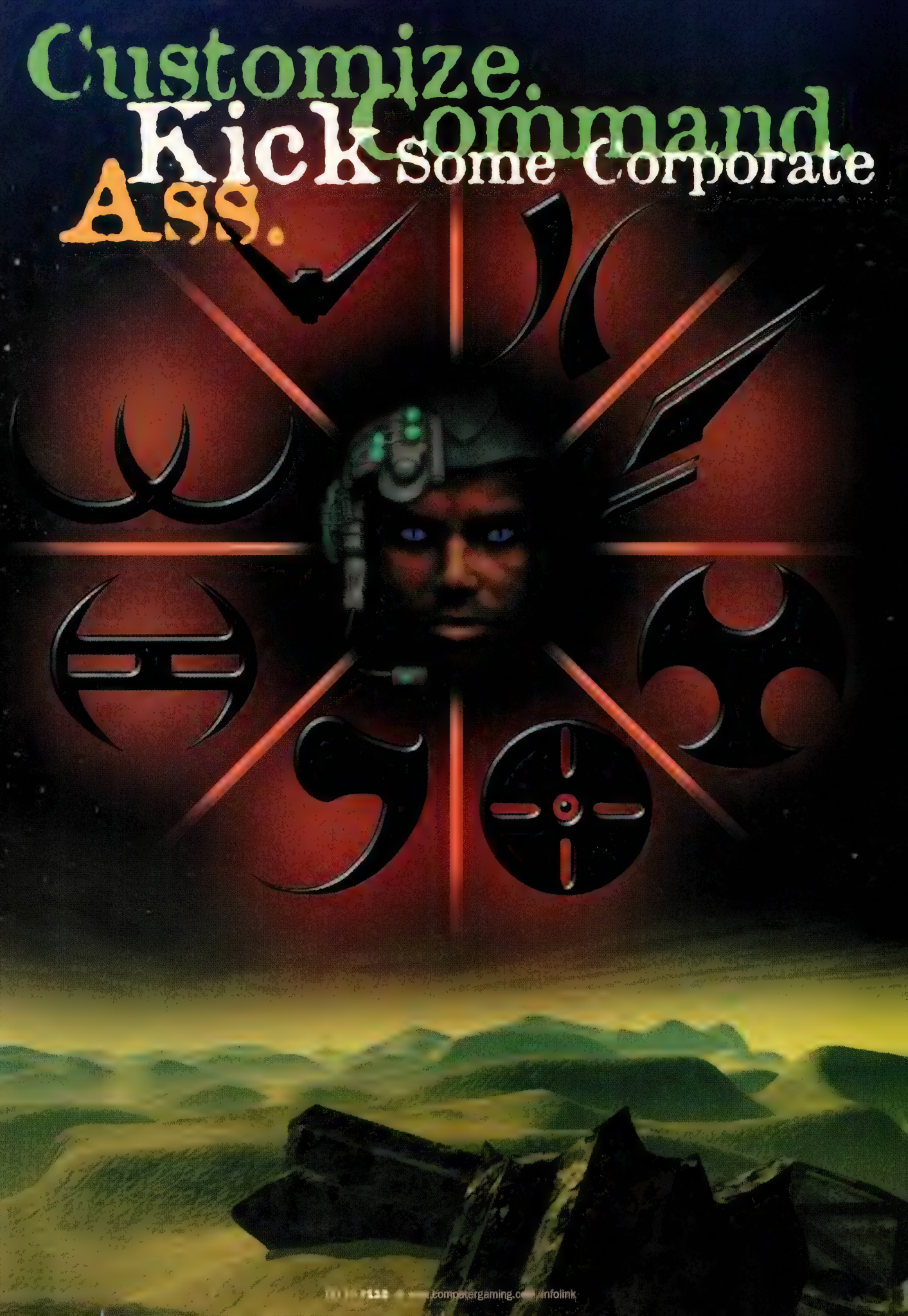
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CGW Review Index

These Are the Games We Have Reviewed in the Last Two Months

Game Name	Issue	Page	Publisher	Rating
ACTION				
3D Ultra Pinball: Lost Continent	March	140	Sierra On-Line	★★★★
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Daytona USA Deluxe	April	138	Sega Entertainment	★★★
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The Tone Rebellion	April	184	Virgin Interactive	★★★★
WarWind II	April	192	SSI Online	★★★½

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Return as a Jedi

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

This Expansion Pack Takes Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

by Thierry Nguyen

LucasArts took the gaming world by storm last year by releasing JEDI KNIGHT, its phenomenal sequel to the well-done DARK FORCES. As with all good games, there was bound to be an expansion pack, and that's where MYSTERIES OF THE SITH comes in. While JEDI did many things right, it still had enough flaws to make it fall short of a coveted five-star rating. SITH addresses those flaws—but it also introduces a few, which keeps it from achieving perfection.

SITH's plot assumes that Kyle held true to the Light Side in the previous game. You play Kyle and newcomer Jedi-in-training Mara Jade (a staple in the *Star Wars* novels) through 14 levels. The levels are divided into four episodes: two four-level episodes and two three-level episodes. You play Kyle in the first episode before switching to Mara.

RETURN OF THE RANCOR Some of the enemies in SITH, such as this Rancor, are good additions, while others are not. Also notice the new colored lighting, which is evident here.

Between most of the levels, SITH presents a cut-scene that uses the game engine itself—similar to TOMB RAIDER or amateur QUAKE movies. Instead of live-action videos, you get character models flailing their arms to voice-overs. I had no problems with these cut-scenes, but some gamers will find this style disappointing.

A BIGGER, BETTER DEATH STAR

SITH comes bristling with numerous enhancements and additions. The first change you'll see is the addition of colored lighting, which heightens the atmosphere of the levels. It's not QUAKE II, but it greatly improves the mood over JEDI. Other enhancements to level design include more ship models to create a more populated feel in spaceport and shipyard levels.

Also, the enemy AI—a shortcoming in JEDI—has been improved. Previously, if you removed an enemy's weapon via Force Pull, the seemingly brain-dead enemy simply ran into the wall. Now, however, some enemies will at least try to punch you.

The Force system is different this time, as there is no Dark or Light side quotient. Instead, the Force powers are divided into four groups, allowing you to pick a limited number of powers from each menu. This provides more flexibility, especially in multiplayer games, as you can now mix Light and Dark powers.

For multiplayer, we get a host of new levels modeled on locations from the *Star Wars* trilogy (such as the Emperor's Throne Room) and a new type of game, "Kill the Fool with the Ysalamiri," which is the JEDI version of OUTLAWS' "Kill the Fool with the Chicken."

There are also new character types with different stats and starting weaponry, as well as a "Force defense" power that dampens the effect Jedi players' Force powers have, and which keeps Jedis from dominating every session.

TRAINING IS INCOMPLETE

The weapons in SITH seemed geared for multiplayer games. While the Sniper Scope and Seeking Rails add fun and practicality, the Flash Detonators and Carbonite Rifles were really useful only in multiplayer games.

The level design has pluses and minuses. While some levels ooze with atmosphere and good architecture (such as the beginning base and the swamps preceding the Sith temple), others are uninspired, consisting of little more than large rooms and nonsensical lifts.

Overall, SITH is a good expansion to *CGW*'s 1997 Game of the Year, JEDI KNIGHT. It has graphics, AI, and multiplayer enhancements, and some brilliant levels with fiendishly difficult puzzles. But a few uninspired levels and weapons, and a storyline that doesn't match the quality of JEDI KNIGHT's, keep MYSTERIES OF THE SITH from recapturing that JEDI magic.

APPEAL: JEDI KNIGHT, *Star Wars*, and 3D-shooter fans.

PROS: Enhanced engine includes colored lighting, cameras, and better AI; new Force powers; enhanced multiplayer; some outstanding levels.

CONS: Some mediocre levels; story is a bit hackneyed; new weapons not well-suited for solo play.

CG RATED ★★★★

Price: $34.95
System Requirements: Pentium 90, Windows 95, 16MB RAM, 50MB hard-drive space, 2x CD-ROM, VGA graphics card, Win 95–compatible sound cards; requires original JEDI KNIGHT game.
Multiplayer Support: Modem (2 players), TCP/IP, LAN, Internet Gaming Zone (2–8 players); 1 CD per player.
3D Support: Direct3D.
Designer/Publisher: LucasArts
San Rafael, CA
(800) 985-8227
www.lucasarts.com

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

UnXceptional

We're Still Waiting for That Good Comic Book Game

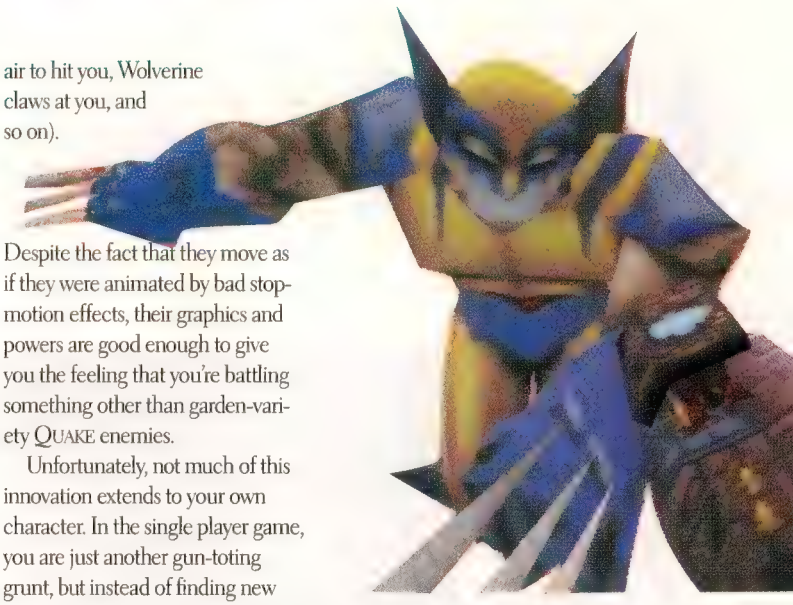
by Martin E. Cirulis

After wandering through the "official" *X-Men* expansion for QUAKE, known charmingly as THE RAVAGES OF APOCALYPSE (TROA), I started to wonder what portion of the superheroic ideal a rocket launcher extols. But then again, you're no hero; you're a poor, tormented minion of Magneto, sent by your master to save the X-Men and thwart Apocalypse's plans for world domination.

MUTANT MASSACRES

Yes, comic fans, it's time for Marvel Universe mutants to be cut down in a hail of exotic weapons fire…again. It seems there hasn't been quite enough death and mayhem over in the Marvel Universe, so supervillain Apocalypse has used his big ol' rubbery brain to whip up a legion of X-Men clones to take over the world. Of course, thwarting this menace seems like a job for a superhero, but all the world gets is you: some poor soul with morphing metal weapons for hands and no compunction about gunning down replicas of your beloved heroes.

What all this boils down to in gaming terms is that TROA is a mild update to the QUAKE engine, replacing all the baddies with sprites resembling 12 mutant heroes who are, or were, members of the X-Men. These X-clones are actually armed with interesting interpretations of their counterparts' superpowers (Cyclops's eye beams cut through the air to hit you, Wolverine claws at you, and so on).



Despite the fact that they move as if they were animated by bad stop-motion effects, their graphics and powers are good enough to give you the feeling that you're battling something other than garden-variety QUAKE enemies.

Unfortunately, not much of this innovation extends to your own character. In the single player game, you are just another gun-toting grunt, but instead of finding new weapons, you find new types of ammo for your mighty morphin' hand. There are two reasonably interesting episodes to fight through, which give you an enticing taste of supervillainy, as well as an intro level that models the hallowed halls of Xavier's Mansion. However, there just isn't enough here to justify calling this a "superhero game."

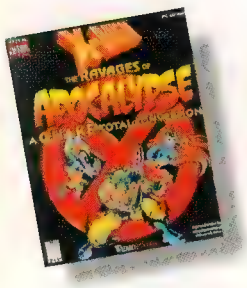
I'D RATHER READ COMICS While the X-Men look and act authentic in this QUAKE total conversion, the game is pretty weak.

Luckily, this is remedied by the multiplayer suite, which allows you to discard the space marine clone you're stuck with in single-player mode and take on the form of any of the featured X-Men.

Many enthusiasts will be disappointed that they can express their superpowers only via two attacks, but it is still kind of fun considering the utter lack of superhero computer games so far.

XAVIER'S NIGHTMARE

Despite the fact that WizardWorks has tried to increase the value of this title by adding a basic level builder and an Internet game search program, this is not top-dollar software. If you are a fan of the current, blood-drenched *X-Men* milieu and can get this expansion at a bargain price, you might come away happy. For the rest of us, who want more than dressed-up QUAKE goons or X-Men clones, the wait for a true superhero game goes on.



Price: $34.99
System Requirements: Registered and installed version of QUAKE, Pentium 90, DOS 5.0, 16MB RAM, 100MB hard-drive space, 2x CD-ROM.
3D Support: 3Dfx, OpenGL.
Multiplayer Support: Modem, Serial cable (2 players); LAN, Internet (up to 32 players).
Developer: Zero Gravity Entertainment
Publisher: Wizard Works
New York, NY
(800) 229-2714
www.wizworks.com

APPEAL: Any *X-Men* fan who doesn't have high expectations.

PROS: Some nice twists on the QUAKE engine; level editor; and good multiplay option for *X-Men* fans.

CONS: Nothing very superheroic about the game; makes one nostalgic for those free, shareware DOOM wads.

CG RATED ★★

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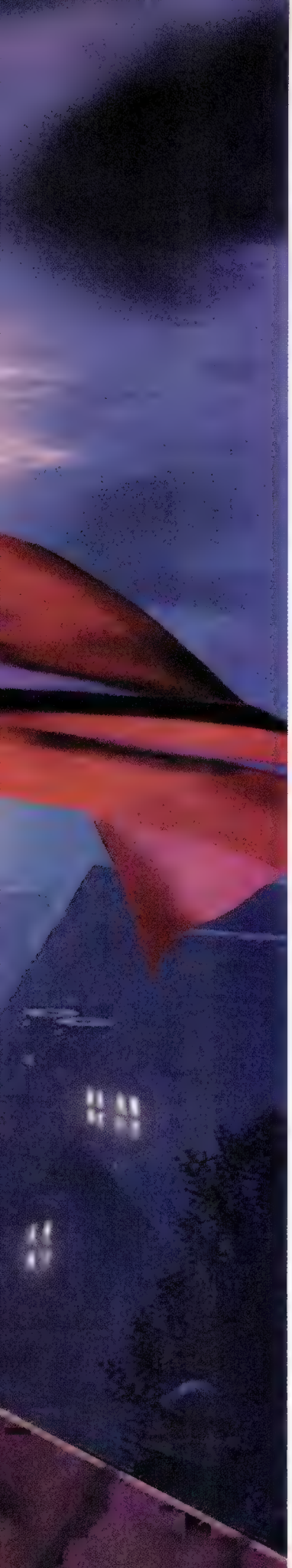

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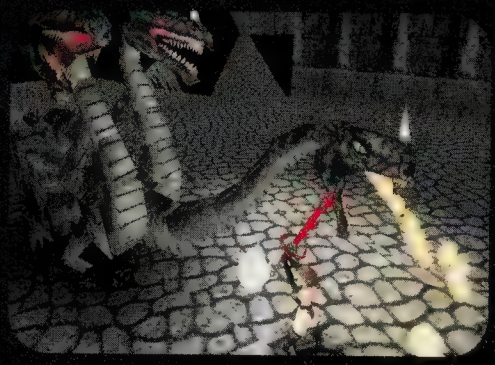

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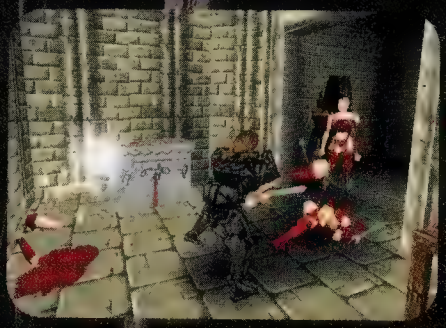

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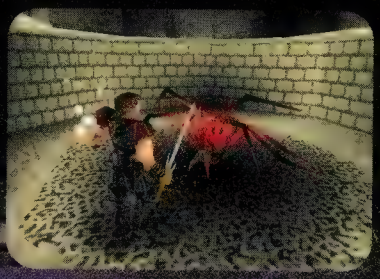

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Scrap Iron

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

Lag-luster Tank Warfare in Sony's Online Shooter

by Robert Coffey

With all the yapping about this year's "real-time strategy wars," people are overlooking the tribblelike proliferation of online-only games: NETSTORM, NETWAR, SOLE SURVIVOR, ULTIMA ONLINE, MERIDIAN 59 REVELATION, and now TANARUS, a middle-of-the-road tank shooter from Sony.

FULL METAL JACKET

Competition in TANARUS centers around games of Capture the Flag, with up to four teams of five players each. TANARUS has more depth than most shooters, challenging gamers with several options in selecting and outfitting tanks. There are five basic tanks, each with a set number of bays that players can fill with weapons and modules. It's a delicate balancing act to configure a tank: Do you load up on more armor-piercing shells or go for that shield booster? Tank-tweaking is one of the most enjoyable aspects of TANARUS. The limited number of bays also works to enhance team play—since flags can be captured only with bay-hogging Flag Catchers, teams will have to defend the basically helpless tank that makes the grab. You can save up to three different configurations for each type of tank, a handy feature when you consider that your tank may need to fill different roles in advanced play.

The action plays out across various drab cityscapes, with ramps leading to upper levels so gamers can rain down death from above. In addition to capturing flags, teams vie to control battery-charging recon stations that pepper the city. If you and your teammates fail to capture recon stations, you'll be left with sluggish, seriously underpowered tanks that are unable to fire energy weapons.

In order to keep more skilled players from feasting on newbies, TANARUS assigns ranks to players according to the points they get for kills. Special beginner arenas can be entered only by lower-ranked players, allowing them to gain valuable experience. As players gain rank, they may enter the tougher arenas, join teams, and compete in the official TANARUS league.

TAG TEAM Success in TANARUS hinges on teamwork, whether it's protecting a flag-snatching teammate or ganging up on other players.

FROM LAG TO SLAG

TANARUS sounds as if it would be a pretty cool LAN game; unfortunately, it's not set up for LANs. It's Internet-only and it suffers from the scourge of all online fare: lag, lag, lag. The TANARUS server lacks any sort of pregame ping indicator, which makes joining a game a crap shoot. Once you enter an arena, latency problems become apparent when you notice that you keep dying while the competition flits about like armored gnats. Even a good connection can go to hell once gamers start slugging it out. Logging out and joining a different arena isn't always a solution. On more than one occasion I couldn't get a decent connection during peak times in any arena. Sure, playing at nonpeak hours is an option; then again, playing when there aren't any other players around sort of defeats the purpose of an online game. While gamers will tolerate some lag, it takes a strong game to summon up that kind of forgiveness.

TANARUS is not without other shortcomings. Joystick controls, particularly vertical turret movement, are imprecise. High system requirements deliver ho-hum graphics (with the exception of the change from day to night), dull sound, and only serviceable force-feedback effects. Finally, there is a monthly charge of $9.95 after the first month of play. Over the course of a year, that's about $110 for lag-racked play of an average game. That kind of money would be better spent on other, far less frustrating games.

▶APPEAL: Gamers nostalgic for those BATTLEZONE matches in yesterday's arcades.

▶PROS: More depth and strategy than most shooters; lots of tank customization options; beginner-friendly player-ranking system; organized league.

▶CONS: Lag times suck; play doesn't warrant monthly fee; steep system requirements; looks and sounds average at best.

CG RATED ★★★

Price: $19.95 plus $9.95/month
System Requirements: Pentium 120 (P133 or better recommended), Windows 95, 16MB RAM (32MB recommended), 30MB hard-drive space, 4x CD-ROM, SVGA graphics, Sound Blaster 16–compatible sound card, 28.8Kbps modem (33.6 or better recommended), Internet connection. 3D graphics accelerator recommended.
3D Support: 3Dfx.
Multiplayer Support: Internet (2–20 players per game).
Designer: Sony Computer Entertainment America, Incorporated
Publisher: Sony Interactive Studios America
San Diego, CA
(619) 824-5500
www.tanarus.com

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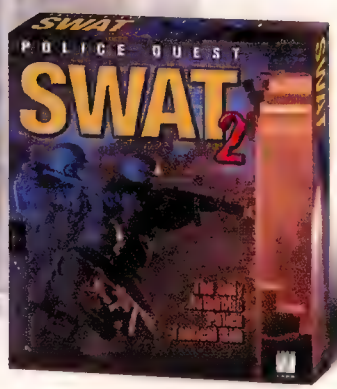

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★★★ REVIEW • SUBSPACE

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

Subpar Space

by Mark Clarkson

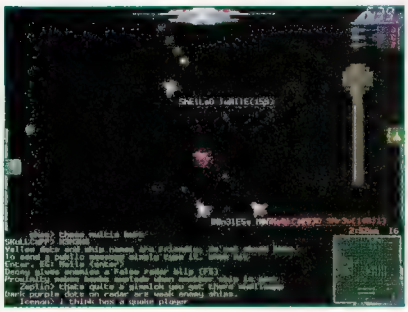
For some top-down, 2D shooting action in the final frontier, you could do worse than SUBSPACE, offered exclusively for play over the Internet by Virgin Interactive.

SUBSPACE presents a variety of games, played in mazelike arenas, that range from your basic team-on-team deathmatches and turf battles to capture the flag and space wars "soccer." You choose to play one of seven ships, each with its own unique characteristics: The Lancaster's plasma bombs bounce off obstacles; the Weasel has superior electronic countermeasures; the Spider carries a cloaking device, and so forth.

Power-ups provide the usual increases in weapons, speed, and special abilities. In a unique twist, when one team member grabs a power-up, every team member gains the benefits.

This game would be a lot more fun to play if my fingers weren't always tripping over the interface. For example, with each ship offering multiple weapons, you have to hit the Ctrl key for one weapon, the Tab key for another, Shift+Tab for one more, and F6 for yet another. Good luck dogfighting while hammering out the various key combinations for attacking and defending (such as Up+Shift+PgUp, Shift+Tab, Shift+Ctrl). There is, as far as I can find, no way of reassigning the controls.

Still, SUBSPACE already has a following, and I never had trouble finding several games to join. Since the CD contains a level editor and server software, there should be even more games on the way. If you're looking for some 2D multiplayer mayhem with dozens of like-minded gamers, SUBSPACE may be for you.



MINIMAYHEM SUBSPACE offers a variety of multiplayer games over the Internet, although the look and controls could use polishing.

Price: $29.99
System Requirements: Pentium 60, Windows 95, 12MB RAM.
Multiplayer Support: Internet only (dozens of players supported per arena).
3D Support: None.
Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Irvine, CA
(714) 833-8710
subspace.vie.com

APPEAL: Gamers pining away for the simple days of arcade action.

PROS: Multiplayer Internet play in a variety of arenas.

CONS: Convoluted interface coupled with 2D graphics.

CG RATED ★★★

★★★ REVIEW • CARMAGEDDON SPLAT PACK

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

Turbo Boost

by Scott A. May

Just when you thought it was safe to wipe the blood off your windshield, Interplay and SCi unleash the SPLAT PACK, a satisfactory add-on to last year's arcade destruct-o-fest: CARMAGEDDON. Designed to test your racing skills—and intestinal fortitude—the game provides fantasy relief for rush-hour rage.

The SPLAT PACK adds 20 new theme-based tracks to the original, including several new network-only courses, such as *Figure 8*, the ultimate multiplayer fender bender. You'll also find 15 new cars, including the Red Eagle 2 and Hawke Deluxe, but you can choose from only half the roster until you advance to the top rank. Two of the more outrageous new vehicles are a marauding snowplow and an ominous black semi, which can knock you out of the race with a single hit. The bad news is that because the SPLAT PACK installs to its own directory, these new cars can't be used on the original tracks.

Of course, there's more blood, guts, and body parts. New pedestrian targets include sheep, buffalo, prisoners, and Elvis impersonators. All that's missing are some mimes or computer gaming magazine editors.

There's a 3Dfx patch, which greatly improves the appearance of both the vehicles and the roadside texture-mapping. However, as far as I could tell, 3D acceleration only marginally enhances the gimpy looking pedestrians, or the viscera they gush forth as you mow them down.

Overall, SPLAT PACK's new tracks and vehicles significantly extend the play value of CARMAGEDDON. Come for the racing, but stay for the entrails. Works for me.

CRIMSON TIDE More tracks, more cars, and more things to squish give the CARMAGEDDON SPLAT PACK its dubious appeal.

Price: $19.95
System Requirements: Pentium 90, Windows 95 and MS-DOS, 16MB RAM, original CARMAGEDDON game required.
Multiplayer Support: Modem (2 players), LAN (2–6 players).
3D Support: 3Dfx.
Publisher: Interplay Productions
Irvine, CA
(800) 468-3775
www.interplay.com

APPEAL: Racers with blood lust.

PROS: 20 challenging new tracks; 15 new lethal opponents; 3Dfx support.

CONS: Same old game, with more carnage; new vehicles can't be used on original tracks.

CG RATED ★★★

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shoot, shoot, run, run

bored yet?

run, stop, hear soldiers flanking yo
scanner, duck under gun turret's fi
lines, turn on flashlight, sneak pas
window, surprise squad of soldie
H λ L F -

MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

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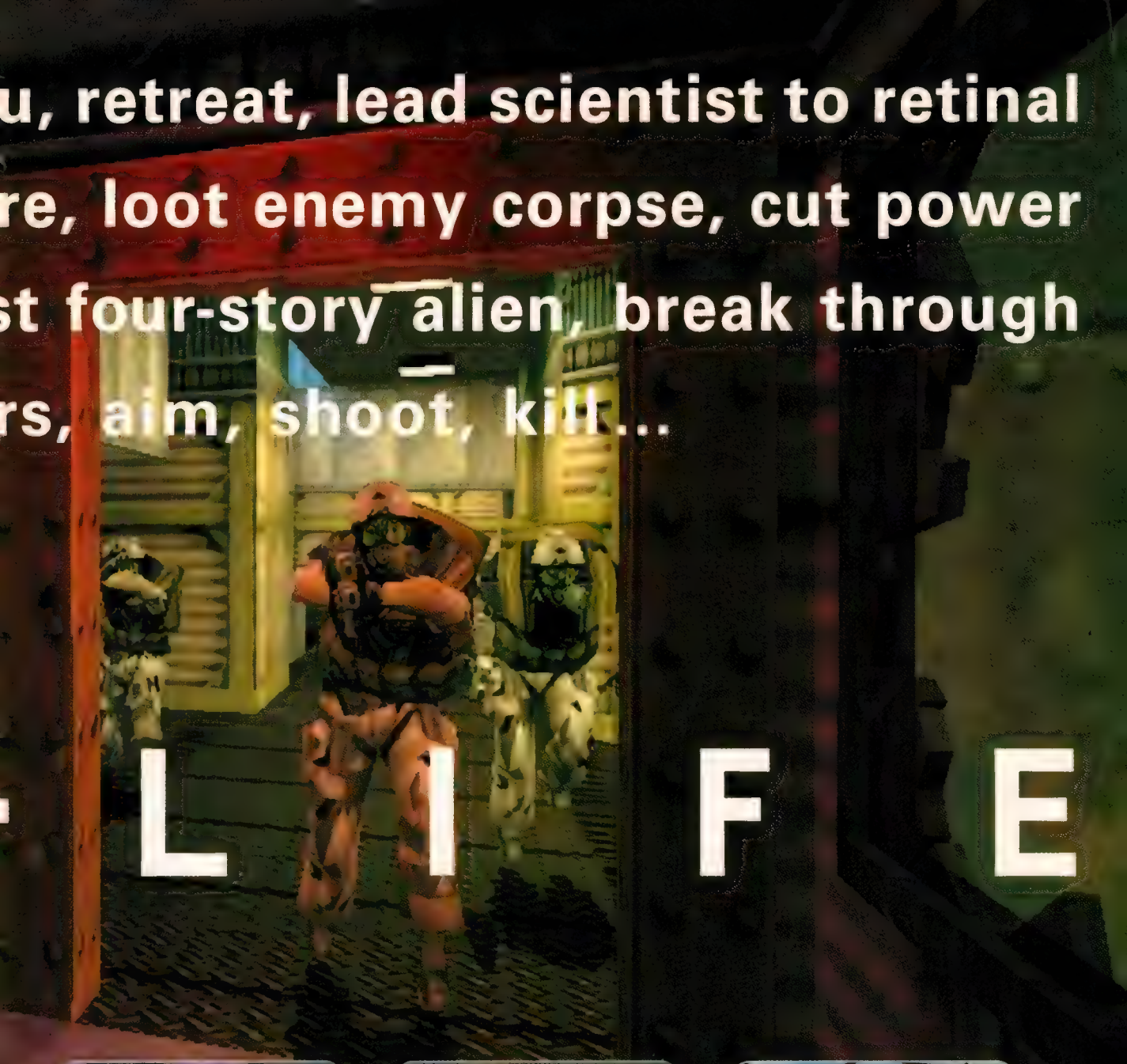
u, retreat, lead scientist to retinal

re, loot enemy corpse, cut power

st four-story alien, break through

rs, aim, shoot, kill...



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★★★½ **REVIEW • BALLS OF STEEL**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

Ball Breaker

by Mark Clarkson

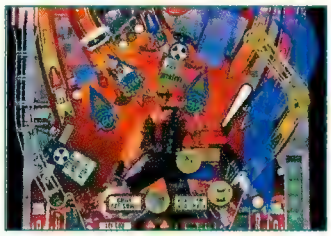
As the name implies, GT Interactive and Pinball Wizard's collaborative effort, BALLS OF STEEL, is a pinball sim with manly themes for manly men...and the women who love them. There are five "ballsy" tables to choose from, each more manly than the last. Whether you're slaying dragons on the *Conan*-esque *Barbarian* table, diffusing bombs in *Firestorm*, or battling familiar alien invaders in *Duke Nukem*, you can bet that the motif will be macho mayhem.

BALLS does a good job of mimicking modern, high-tech pinball machines. The tables are fairly deep, with lots of tasks and specials, and even interstitial games using the flippers and the dot-panel display.

Pros can nudge the table to deflect the ball, but you won't see it represented onscreen; the table doesn't shake at all. My biggest problem with BALLS is the view. You can choose between a scrolling view and a full-table view. I found the scrolling view useless: There's too little of the table in sight. There's no perspective in either mode—just a persistent and unrealistic view of the table from above.

But BALLS is hardly the only PC pinball game to suffer flattened perspective. The tables are still beautiful. They're also convincingly 3D, with plenty of ramps and nifty gadgetry.

There is even multiplayer support for up to four players in hotseat mode. If you like your pinball steeped in testosterone, BALLS OF STEEL is a chrome-plated match.



COME GET SOME BALLS OF STEEL is a macho pinball game, and nowhere is that more apparent than in this "Duke" table, where you kill aliens.

Price: $34.99
System Requirements: Pentium 100, Windows 95, 16MB RAM.
3D Support: None.
Multiplayer Support: Hotseat (up to 4 players).
Publisher: GT Interactive
New York, NY
(800) 469-5961
www.gtinteractive.com

APPEAL: Anyone looking for some testosterone-laden pinball action.

PROS: Challenging and intricate table design; lovely graphics; arcade-quality sound.

CONS: No perspective view; screen doesn't shake in response to nudges; nothing really new.

CG RATED ★★★★

★½ **REVIEW • TEAM 47 GOMAN**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

Mech It Stop!

by Thierry Nguyen

Gamers looking for a giant robot fix that mixes Japanese style Mecha (à la *Robotech*) and MECHWARRIOR action should keep on looking. TEAM 47 GOMAN, the robot shooter from 47-Tek, has the Mecha half right, but completely fails when it gets to the action department.

This game pits you against six "Children of Nemesis" and their monstrous followers in six city arenas. To fight these creatures, you have a choice of using one of five different Robots. Each city has three monuments, and to get a perfect victory all the monuments must survive (this is nearly impossible, since the monsters start next to one). The mission ends when you kill the main "Child."

The game's main problem is its length. With only six levels and one main monster per level, it's extremely brief. And while there are five Robots to use, there's no appreciable difference between them.

The other problem is the control scheme. Apparently, 47-TEK uses a different keyboard than we do, since the initial layout is simply bizarre. It won't let you map the controls to the arrow keys, and it makes no mention of the arrow keys, yet you can still use them in the actual game.

Without even going into topics such as bad texture alignment, single-plane levels, uninspiring sound, and bad clipping, I'm hard-pressed to recommend this game to anyone. At least the bundleware WATCHY arcade game that comes with it is easy to get into.

SAN FRANCISCO RUSH A rare shot of the San Francisco level; since there aren't any enemies, the textures are lined up, and this monument is still intact.

Price: $49.95
System Requirements: Pentium 60, Windows 95, 16MB RAM.
3D Support: Direct3D, 3Dfx, Power VR, Rendition.
Multiplayer Support: None.
Publisher: 47-Tek
(415) 561-0700
www.47-Tek.com

APPEAL: Mecha scene fans.

PROS: It's got the anime Mecha style down pat; includes a bundleware game.

CONS: Bad textures; weak level design; bad sound; clipping problems; extremely brief; bizarre control interface.

CG RATED ★

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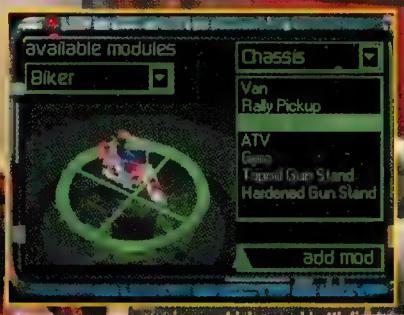

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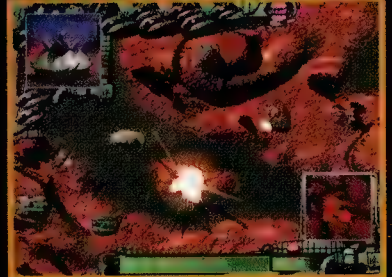

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★½ REVIEW • VIRUS

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

Don't Catch This Virus

by Scott A. May

Like most great disaster games, VIRUS: THE GAME sounds pretty good on paper. A master virus has invaded your PC and spawned an army of attack droids. Its goal is to corrupt critical files and crash your system. To prevent this from happening, you must search the myriad pathways of your hard drive to find and destroy the evil virus.

The game's only true hook is its unique environment, representing a 3D model of your computer's actual file structure. In theory, this means that the game looks and plays slightly different on everyone's PC.

In reality, what you get is a never-ending series of nearly identical corridors and rooms, texture-mapped with high-tech wallpaper and snapshots of your PC's directory structure. You float through this 360-degree world, zap attacking bugs, and defend your system from doom. Strategy elements involve building various anti-virus installations, including repair bays, munitions and vehicle factories, defense rooms, and a KB transformer, which converts kilobytes into energy.

Navigation through the game requires mastering a convoluted assortment of keystrokes to move, turn, and attack. No joystick support is offered. Gameplay unfolds in a series of increasingly difficult missions. Unfortunately, at higher levels, the game becomes so unforgiving and repetitive, you can be under attack and lose the game in a matter of seconds.

Even on my Pentium 233 MMX, the game's animation jerks and sputters like nobody's business. The game's visual effects are also dated and boring; Sir-Tech should have supported 3D cards. The 13-page manual is woefully inadequate.

VIRUS: THE GAME is merely a low-budget DESCENT wannabe that's plagued by outdated design and poor execution.

VIRUS DETECTED Although it might sound cool to fight 3D viruses in your own computer, it isn't.

Price: $49
System Requirements: Pentium 100, Windows 95, 16MB RAM.
Multiplayer Support: Modem, serial, IPX network (2 players).
3D Support: None.
Publisher: Sir-Tech Software
Ogdensburg, NY
(800) 447-1230
www.sir-tech.com

APPEAL: Action/strategy masochists.

PROS: Ingenious concept.

CONS: Horrific controls; repetitive gameplay; bland graphics.

CGW RATED

★★ REVIEW • REDNECK RAMPAGE: SUCKIN' GRITS ON ROUTE 66

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

Suck On This

by Scott May

Leonard and Bubba hit the road in SUCKIN' GRITS ON ROUTE 66, a set of add-on adventures for Interplay's backwoods first-person shooter, REDNECK RAMPAGE. Unfortunately, the dangers of inbreeding still apply to what's basically a one-joke parody of this popular genre.

Created with the painfully outdated Build engine, this add-on disc does nothing to improve upon the original game's simplistic graphics or repetitive action.

The game features 12 new locations, including the Oddity Museum and Alien Crash Site, Big Billy's World Famous Gut Bustin' Brewery, Mystery Dinosaur Cave, Pet Coffin Factory, and, of course, the World's Smelliest Flea Market. They're loosely—and I mean *very* loosely—tied together by a *Route 66* highway theme, with occasional rest stops for Bubba to take a leak by the side of Leonard's pickup. Otherwise, there's no discernible connection between these points of interest, which look so similar that there's almost no reason to play them all.

There are new varmints to blast, but for the most part they come off as ignorant as the originals. Likewise, the new scenery is simply a rehash of the first game, complete with eye-crossing perspectives and primitive texture-mapped walls. 3D hardware support? Not in this neck of the woods.

It's safe to say that only diehard fans of REDNECK RAMPAGE will find enough knee-slapping humor in SUCKIN' GRITS ON ROUTE 66 to hold their interest. For you city slickers who've played QUAKE II or JEDI KNIGHT, this hillbilly shooter is about as flavorful as a hubcap of fresh road kill.

BOOBY TRAP One of the more lascivious foes in SUCKIN' GRITS ON ROUTE 66. Despite a few fresh faces it's the same old game.

Price: $19.95
System Requirements: Pentium 90, MS-DOS 5.0 or higher, 16MB RAM.
Multiplayer Support: Modem (2 players), LAN, Internet, Engage (up to 8 players).
3D Support: None.
Publisher: Interplay Productions
(800) 468-3775
www.interplay.com

APPEAL: Good ol' boy RAMPAGERS.

PROS: Extends life span of original REDNECK RAMPAGE.

CONS: Graphics and gameplay still dated; despite new digs, still repetitive; no 3D hardware support.

CGW RATED

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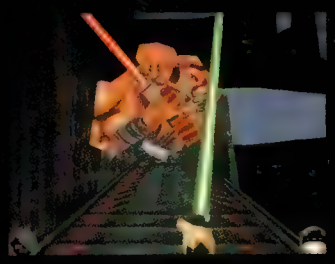
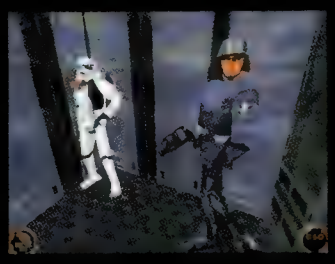

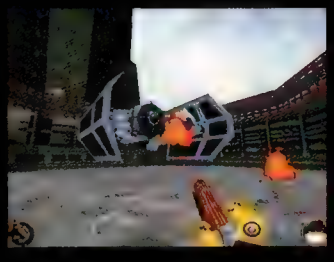
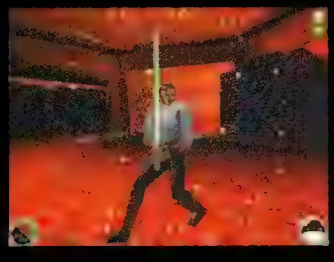
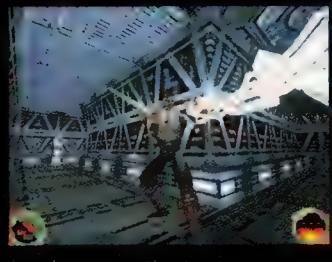

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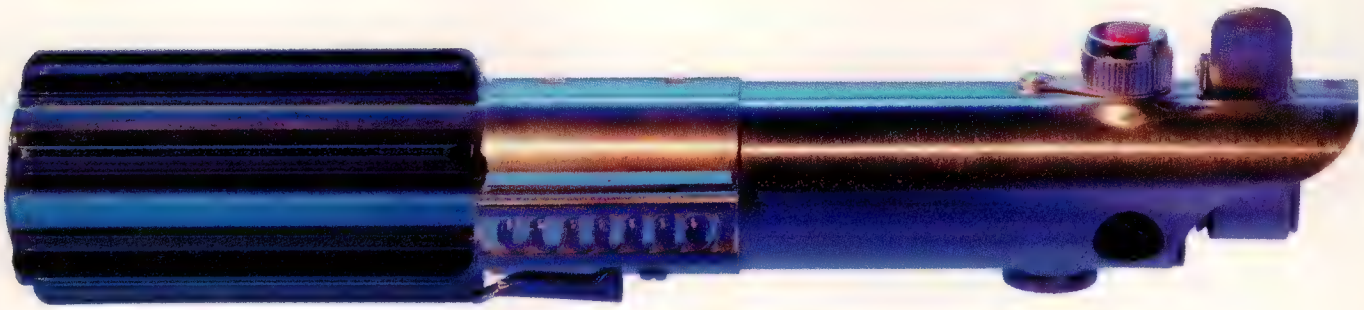

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DIFFICULTY LEVEL: ADVANCED

Battle Weary

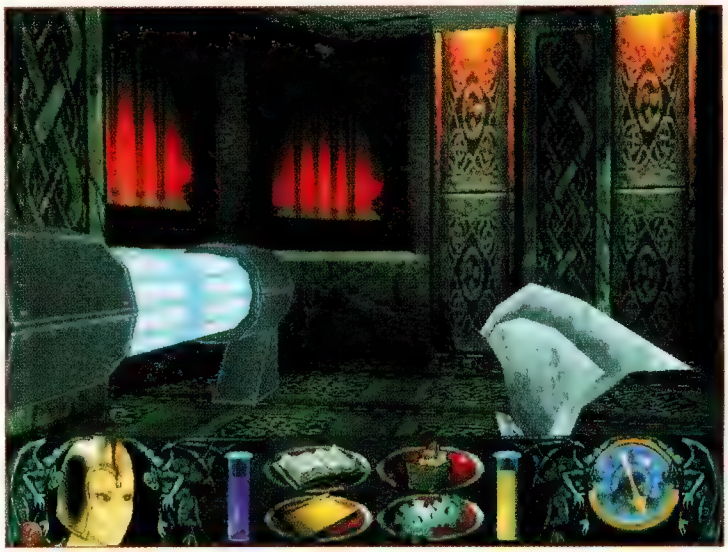
The Follow-up to DAGGERFALL May Be Too Hard for Its Own Good

by Scorpia

With MORROWIND (ELDER SCROLLS 3) at least a year away, and with gamers clamoring for something of a less-epic scope than titles such as DAGGERFALL, Bethesda has initiated the "Legend" series: shorter games based in the world of Tamriel, allied to the main plots, but separate from them. BATTLESPIRE launches this new line.

The game takes place in the days when Jagar Tharn was still causing trouble (circa ARENA). The Battlespire is home and training ground for Battlemages. Just before you, a novice, come for a visit, it's invaded and taken over by a Daedra prince and his minions. With no way of getting out, you can only go on, hoping for the best while expecting the worst.

Much in the way of interface, gameplay, and characters will be familiar to those who have played the previous games, but don't let that mislead you. BATTLESPIRE was deliberately designed to be a very tough game, and part of its difficulty comes from the fairly severe limitations placed on your character.



MORE POWER TO YA The game conceives the Battlespire as being anchored in place by these massive power cylinders.

Price: $54.99
System Requirements: Pentium 133, DOS 5.0 or greater (Win 95–compatible in DOS mode), 16MB RAM, 150MB hard-drive space, 4x CD-ROM, SVGA graphics, mouse; supports most major sound cards.
3D Support: None.
Multiplayer Support: LAN or Internet (2–8 players).
Developer/Publisher: Bethesda Softworks
Rockville, MD
(800) 677-0700
www.bethsoft.com

NUMBER CRUNCHING

You can choose from a wide range of precreated classes or make your own from scratch. Unlike in DAGGERFALL, however, the custom template is saved this time, so it can be used again with other characters.

The similarity ends there. In DAGGERFALL, the template established class minimums for stats (strength, agility, and so on), which were then modified by character race and dice rolls. In BATTLESPIRE, the values you set for the stats are it; no modifications of any kind occur. If, for example, you set a strength of 55 for the class, that's what it will be for every character using the template, regardless of whether you have a Redguard, High Elf, or anything else. Racial bonuses this time around are for skills only.

Another change is that no skill can rise above its controlling stat. Long Blade, for instance, is based on strength. If the character has a strength of, say, 60, the Long Blade skill cannot go higher than that, however often you use your sword. The same is true for magic and for noncombat skills such as jumping and swimming.

The biggest change, though, is the "build point" system. You receive 4,700 points for your custom character. With this, you modify hit points, stats, and skill percentages; take advantages (if you want any); and purchase magic spells and starting equipment. There is no cost to choose skills, only to increment them.

The one really good thing about this system is that no template—custom or precreated—is written in stone. At any time, you can start over and tinker with the template, making whatever changes you want—provided, of course, you have the necessary points. Any points unused when you're done are held over.

TOUGH LUCK

The next shocker is a big one: no character levels. None. Your character improves only by using skills or enhancing them at the end of a dungeon level, at which time you receive a set number of build points. You *do* automatically get more hit points, based on your endurance rating.

And life doesn't get easier once you're in the spire. There are no inns or places to sleep; there isn't even a command to rest. Healing and restoring spell points must depend on what you find around the spire (or your advantages, if you took regenerate health or spell points).

There are no blacksmiths to repair equipment: When something wears out, it has to be replaced by found items. There are no guilds for training, no spellmaker, no itemmaker. You are entirely dependent on what you can scrounge up as you go through the dungeons.

Spells in particular are limited. You have only a small selection to choose from at the start of the game, and you need to choose wisely. Spell scrolls are rare. Their appearance and type are totally randomized; the chances of a

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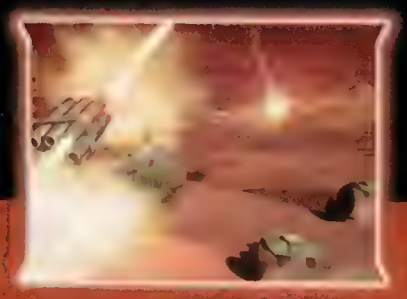

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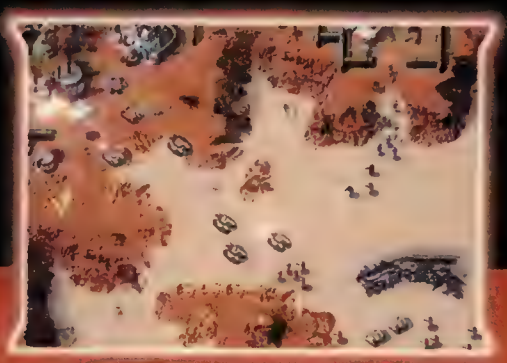

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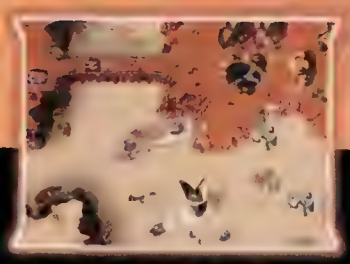

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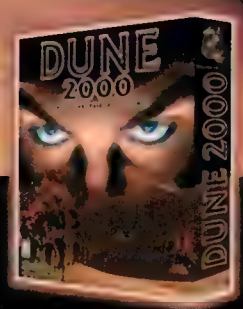

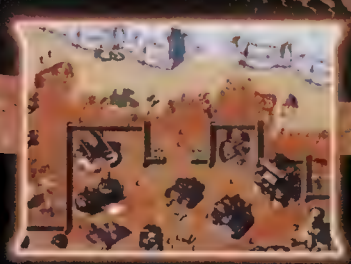

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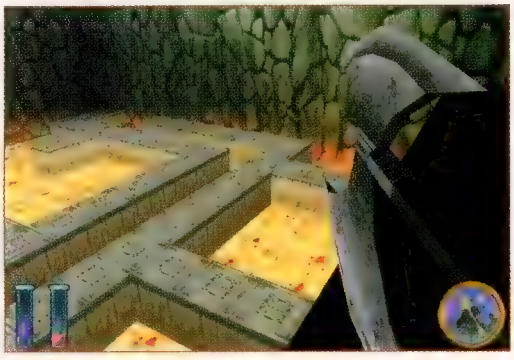

THE FIERY DEPTHS BATTLESPIRE drags you along through encounters both fiery foreign and dully domestic.

spell scroll actually showing up are very low. I found only four myself, and two of them duplicated spells I already had. What you take at the start, therefore, is about all you will have the entire time.

On the other hand, there is a wealth—one might almost say a plethora—of magic items. They can be anything: potions, weapons, armor, clothing, gems. They may have spells on them that you can cast, or they may enhance a skill when equipped. Some restore hit points or mana. Most of the time, the trick is to figure out what these things actually do. They all come with obscure and lengthy names like "Iron Crossbow of Sanguine Swiftblade" or "Gem of the Fawn's Gleaning."

TWO-FINGERED FOES A dark hall, and only a patch away from victory...

CALL TO ARMS

Using spell items, especially in combat, is a laborious procedure. First you open your inventory (the game freezes at this point), then you scroll through the items list to find the item you want (if it isn't near the top), double-click on that, exit the inventory, and finally click on your target to cast the spell. While a little spell ability can come in handy, this isn't a good method to rely on for combat magic. This would have worked better had you been able to associate magic items with special keys the way you can with spells.

Speaking of combat, it's real-time, "swing the mouse to swing your weapon"-type fighting, much as in DAGGERFALL. For spellcasting, you can preassign up to eight hot keys (F1–F8) and cast spells instantly at any time merely by pressing the appropriate key. In fact, you can customize almost the entire keyboard, as the game uses many shortcut keys.

Since BATTLESPIRE is in the hands of invaders, you naturally expect to meet hostile critters, and there are quite a few of them. The interesting part is that you can talk to many of them. Not always, but a fair number are willing to chat before trying to rip you open. Sometimes, you can pick up a little information this way. Once in a while, you may manage to get an opponent to turn neutral. You might *even* be able to talk it into fighting on your behalf. This ability to converse with opponents is one of the game's better features.

HUNT THIS

In addition to staying alive and scrounging goodies, you have to look for special items on each level. This is one of the most irksome aspects of the game. The first five levels aren't much more than elaborate scavenger hunts. Level 5 was the worst. This is the Wild Hunt, on an island, and you're being actively pursued by unpleasant critters, some of which can't be killed. While evading them, you must come up with six keys, six pieces of armor, and a special weapon. I almost lost patience with BATTLESPIRE right there.

I don't mind a little searching, but when the major part of a game is built around "find this, that, and the other," it becomes tedious and shows a lack of creativity. Surely the design team could have come up with something less repetitious. In a huge game like DAGGERFALL, repetition may be unavoidable; in a small, compact game like this, there ought to be more variety.

I also wasn't too happy with the design philosophy itself. While I can appreciate the desire to provide a challenge, the actual execution of the design wasn't a lot of fun. The build points for each level are the same, whether you kill all, none, or some of the monsters. In one respect, then, what you do is almost—but not quite—irrelevant to your progress.

Basically, the game is set up to encourage—actually force—you to deal with combat situations in nontraditional ways, to simply get through the levels by any means you can devise, including running away from opponents. Building up your character, unusually, is a minor part of the game.

Graphically, the game is similar to DAGGERFALL. Everything looks better at a distance; up close, blockiness is often apparent, even in the high-res mode. For all that, the graphics are pretty decent; just don't expect the state-of-the-art.

ENDGAME

BATTLESPIRE leaves me with very mixed feelings. It has a number of good features, but the artificial character limitations, plus the emphasis on the scavenger hunt aspect, make it very trying at times. While I don't mind new approaches to RPGs, this one wasn't done as well as it could have been. Still, the series shows promise. In the meantime, BATTLESPIRE is best-suited for players who won't mind an exceptionally tough outing. Those who prefer more traditional fare may want to skip this one.

Star ratings for Scorpia-reviewed games are by CGW staff. Scorpia disavows numerical ratings for games.

APPEAL: Hard-core RPGers and DAGGERFALL freaks who can handle a challenge.

PROS: Less sprawling than DAGGERFALL; some interesting combat features.

CONS: Almost too hard; lack of traditional character development; weak mapping; too much scavenger hunting; less-than-stellar graphics.

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DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY

Beyond Endurance

You Won't Just Travel Through Time, You'll Waste It Too!

by Robert Coffey

Every so often a game comes along that does everything right. BEYOND TIME isn't that game. Rather, it's an example of everything that can be done wrong in an adventure game. It's got a minuscule assortment of the most non-challenging, uninteresting puzzles ever; run-of-the-mill graphics that are unduly trumpeted on the game box; the same old Egypt/Tibet/Atlantis/outer-space garbage seen in hundreds of better games; and the most tortured pile of claptrap-posing-as-plot I've ever endured.

COMFORTABLY DUMB Graphics that might have been somewhat impressive two years ago come off more like a bad "Laser Floyd" show at the local planetarium.

TIMEWORN

The game begins with a museum curator imploring you to discover what's behind the disappearance of several historic and artistic artifacts. That's the last time anything makes sense. After that, the hopelessly garbled story plays out via FMV sequences revealed through the characters' video journals. Aside from being incomprehensible, these sequences are plagued with bad film-school lighting and the combined talents of those who flunked Remedial Acting 101 at the local community college. Surprisingly, this gibberish is based on a real book called *Obelisk*.

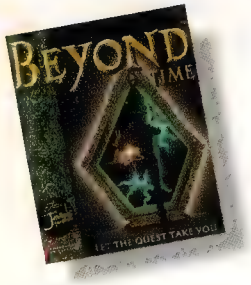
BEYOND TIME wants to be MYST really, really bad and gets this about half right—it's really, really bad. It shoots for those same rich graphics as MYST but misses, delivering instead some very serviceable images that might have been moderately striking a few years ago. It's hard to believe this is the same company that published the visually rich JEWELS OF THE ORACLE a few years back. The game plays out in a letterbox taking up only about a third of the screen, the game world is stiflingly small, and the efforts at introducing a sense of life into the game world come off stiff and cartoonish, with animals moving more like wind-up toys. Sound is a virtual nonentity in the game.

WE DON'T NEED NO STINKIN' PUZZLES

Okay, a limp plot and drab game-world could be forgiven if the gameplay were there, but BEYOND TIME's gameplay is a bit beyond reach. Calling its collection of puzzles a "smattering" is being generous. Far too much of the game asks you to wade through dull text in order to find and copy heaps of hieroglyphics. I'm not adverse to some note-taking, but when it starts with finding and recording four hieroglyphic combinations to unlock one door four times and gets worse from there, I'm sorry, you've lost me.

Typical of BEYOND TIME's complete lack of vision, one number puzzle is used twice, and the rest are a paltry assortment you've probably solved in better games. Stop me if you've heard this before—collect the lost crystals to restore the crystal matrix. Hear me now, game designers of the world: If you catch yourself falling back on that tired "Crystal Matrix" blather it's time to look into a career in dog grooming. As if the puzzles weren't weak enough, blatant hints or outright solutions are usually right nearby.

Topping all this off is a sluggish game engine designed for a 486/66 (yet it still drags on a P150) and a frustrating navigation interface. BEYOND TIME does elicit some emotion: terror—it ends with the threat of a sequel.



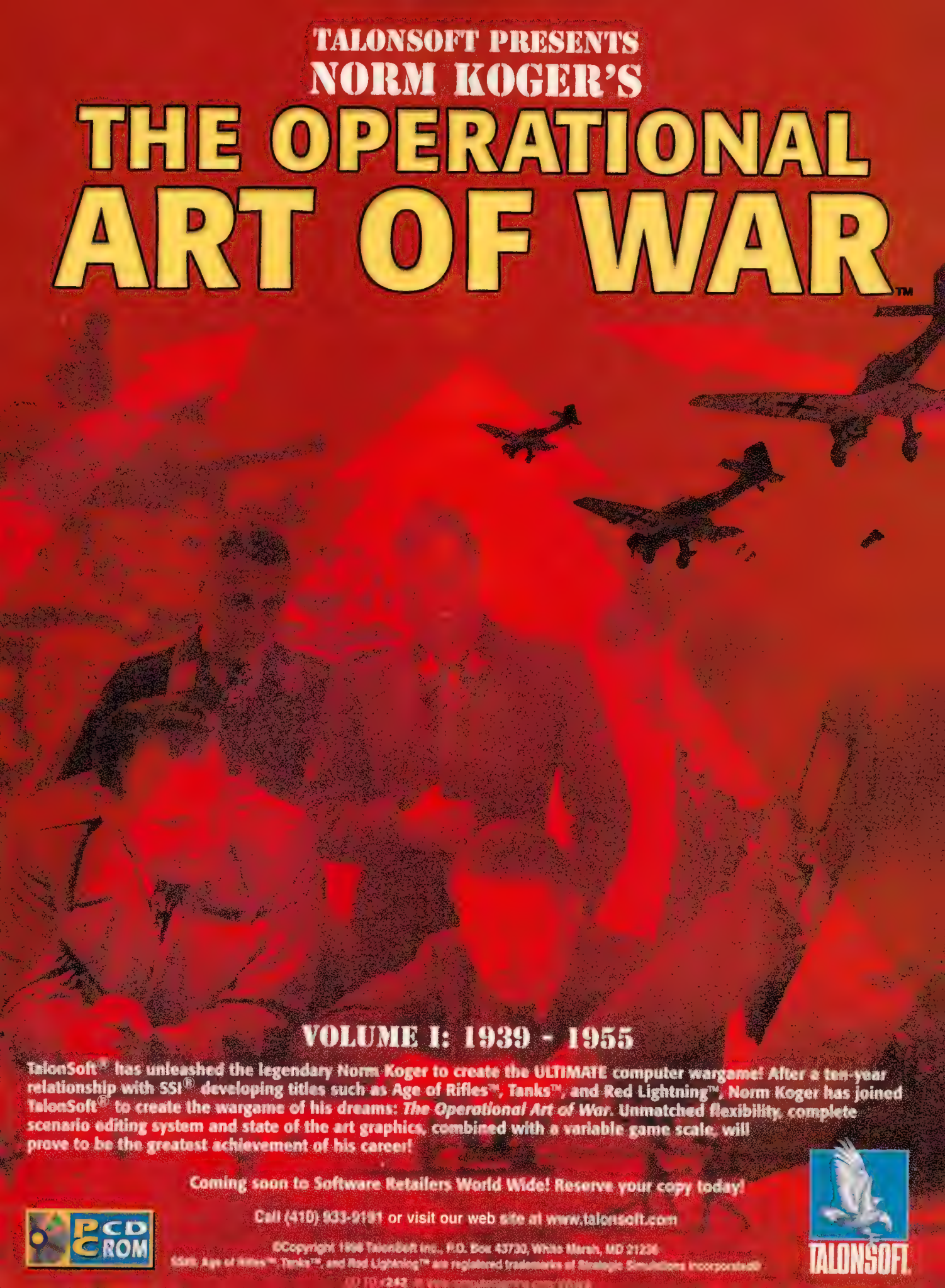
Price: $49.95
System Requirements: 486/66, Windows 3.1, 8MB RAM, 5MB hard-drive space, VGA monitor supporting 256 colors, 2x CD-ROM, Sound Blaster–compatible sound card, mouse.
3D Support: None.
Multiplayer Support: None.
Designer/Publisher: Dreamcatcher Interactive, Inc. Toronto, Canada (416) 398-8588
www.dreamcatcherinc.com

APPEAL: Gamers consumed with self-loathing.

PROS: Included hint book ensures that you won't spend any more time slogging through this game than absolutely necessary.

CONS: The plot is unfathomable and cliché-ridden; dull game-world; a thoroughly dismal collection of uninteresting, unchallenging, un-everything puzzles; sludgy game engine coupled with a crummy movement interface.

CG RATED ★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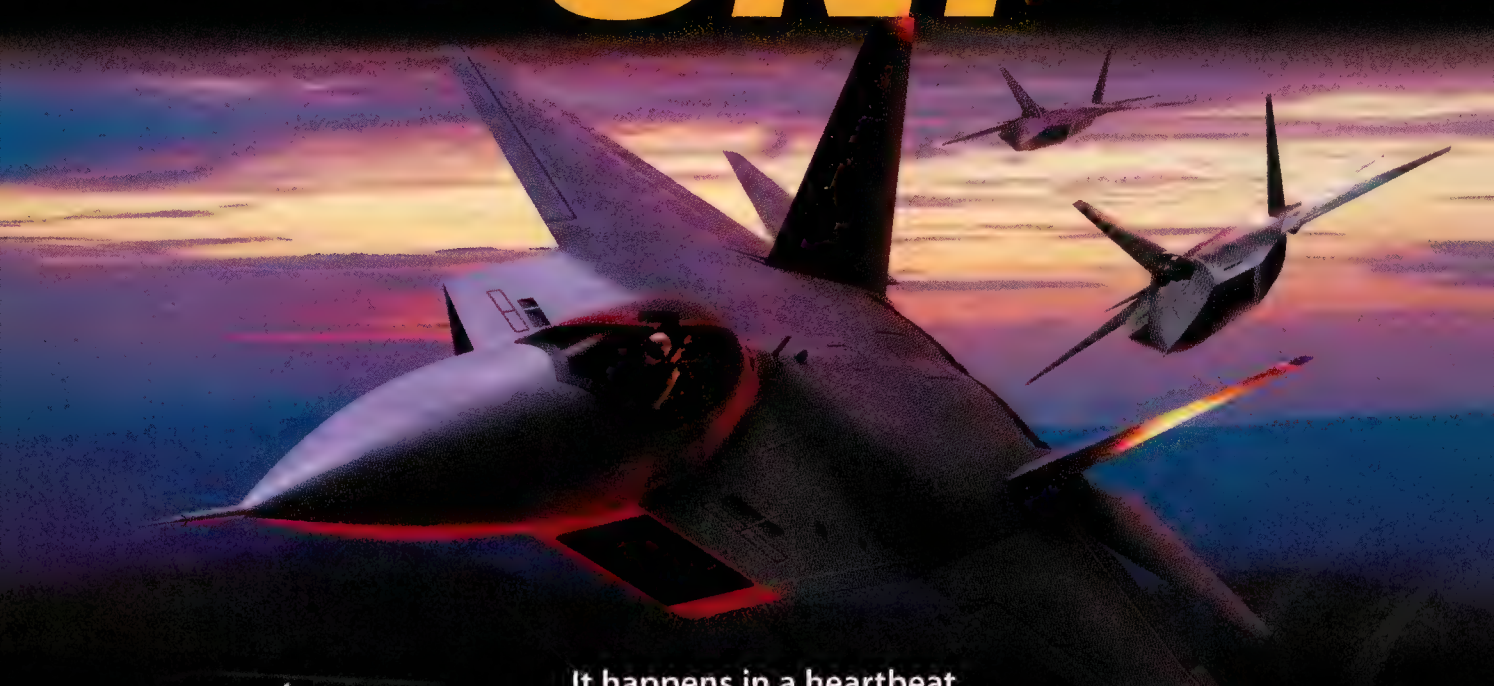

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Something Old, Something New

This Supercharged Air Warrior Still Sports Some Used Parts

by John Nolan

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Air Warrior III is the latest release of the sim that began as the granddaddy of online flight simulations and later grew a solo component. Debuting in October 1987 as the first multiplayer online flight sim (at $5 plus an hour), it continually improved and added features. In December 1992, a box release of the game added limited offline practice, which was leisurely followed in January 1997 by Air Warrior II, a version with interesting offline campaigns. This latest version expands the envelope with 3D graphics, better artificial intelligence, automated online multiplayer historical scenarios, and real-time voice capability.

PICTURE THIS

The new 3D-accelerated graphics are a quantum leap over those of previous versions but do require a Direct3D-compatible video card. Aircraft exteriors are beautifully texture-mapped with colorful squadron markings and plenty of detail, like gunsmoke smudges trailing off the gunports. The cloud effects on the horizon are just outstanding. Sun-blindness, fog effects, new dense black smoke trails from crippled aircraft, and huge black-red-orange puffs of antiaircraft explosions limit visibility. The terrain has been enhanced with nicely rendered mountains, airfields, and farms. These features are scattered about, which keeps frame rates up, so there are still huge expanses of green grass in this virtual world. It's now easier to "feel" your altitude and avoid dragging a wingtip. In the absence of an accelerated 3D card, a software renderer handles the job: The resulting graphics are adequate, but they're basically the same as the older versions.

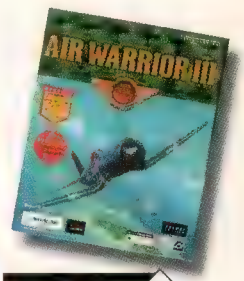
REALITY BITES

Air Warrior III's flight model remains essentially unchanged from previous versions. The Novice, Veteran, and Ace settings are labeled "Realism/Difficulty" in the manual, with the emphasis on difficulty. Novice is a half-speed, easy way to gain familiarity and have fun. Veteran ups the difficulty a bit, running the sim at normal speed without realism features. Ace is intense, adding accelerated stalls, spins, G effects, stall buffeting, and firepower lethality, but it's more of a difficulty adjustment than a realism change.

The two easiest ways to start an argument are to yell "If it ain't pork, it ain't even B-B-Q" in a Texas eatery or to tell a bunch of flight-sim addicts, "This is [or isn't] the most realistic flight model ever programmed." Yet at Ace level, with your feet flat on the floor, you can add full power for takeoff, put your hands in your lap, and your P-51 will docilely roll straight down the runway and gently lift off. *Do not* try this at home in your real Mustang! This isn't the only anomaly in the "full realism" flight model, but remember that this model was created when the 286 chip was king and physics modeling was a dream. In any event, Ace provides a high level of difficulty, challenging almost any gamer and keeping things interesting. You've got

ANCIENT HISTORY The "generic cockpit" view mode is a legacy of the original Air Warrior; it's past retirement age for this old crutch.

CLEAR VIEW Air Warrior III offers excellent Korean War–era jet combat in addition to WWI and WWII campaigns. The new close combat view mode should be the focus of further enhancements with yet more detail and working instrumentation.



Price $49.99
System Requirements: Pentium 133, Windows 95, 24MB RAM, 60 MB hard-drive space, 2x CD-ROM, DirectX 5.0–compatible PCI video card, mouse, joystick recommended.
3D Support: Direct3D
Multiplayer Support: Modem, LAN (2 players) Internet (2–250 players $9.95/month)
Developer: Kesmai
Publisher: Interactive Magic
Research Triangle Park, NC
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www.imagicgames.com

to practice to be good at this level; the acutely sensitive accelerated stall modeling requires almost the steady hands of a brain surgeon.

MISSION MANIA

The game adds a number of new offline missions, bringing the total to more than 450. Campaigns cover World Wars I and II and the Korean War, and allow gamers to fight for either side. Six of these campaigns are new, with four focusing on the Pacific Theater of WWII. New aircraft models round out the already extensive plane set, providing suitable types for the new battles.

The campaign trails are long and tough, with twists and turns based on your performance. Strategic thinking and innovation prove to be vital assets for victory. If you're the "engage at first sight" type, it's going to be a short war; you'll get waxed because the artificial intelligence of offline enemies is better. They now use tactics appropriate for their plane types and energy states: You won't see P-40s stallfighting Zeros anymore. In some missions, the skill and aggressiveness of enemy pilots seem random—you'll meet good and bad pilots—but in others it feels historically correct. For example, the skill level of the Japanese pilots appears to be lower during a campaign later in the war. Overall, wingmen on both sides seem more aware and smarter about tactics

DOTTING THE EYES

Eric Hartmann, a top World War II Ace, used a tactic of "See, Decide, Attack, and Break." The first part is hard to do in AIR WARRIOR III, just as it was in previous versions. Some might argue that the aircraft here are correctly sized, given the wide-angle view and pixel dimensions of the screen. Unfortunately, the resulting image is merely a flyspeck until it's within about 1500 yards. Even as you close, the plane's planform doesn't emerge until about 1000 yards. That's a problem when you want to "do some of that Basic Fighter Maneuvers stuff, Mav," because you have to know your spatial relationship to the bandit.

To accurately re-create a WWII encounter, you need to see the enemy's planform at realistic ranges to determine angle-off and aspect. With a 90 degree angle-off, you should see a B-17's vertical stabilizer at a *minimum* of 2500-3000 yards. Instead, the game gives you about half the normal time to "See and Decide." It still works, since all players are identically handicapped, but it sure makes it tough to enjoy the excellent texture mapping on the aircraft.

New interface improvements include the ability to "tag" a bogey with plane type and range, which really helps you keep track of AIR WARRIOR's specks. The full-screen cockpit now has basic working instruments, an overdue development. A bit more effort in detailing and instrumenting this view mode would consign the old generic cockpit and the compromise "text data" cockpit to the recycling bin.

AIR WARRIOR III shows Kesmai's dedication to continual improvement and responsiveness to player input. It's a worthy successor to its forebears and a blast to play on or offline.

ZEROS HIGH All the aircraft, including this Zero, are well detailed and accurately decorated. The landscapes aren't packed with structures but they are beautifully rendered.

With the addition of suggested, historically based miniscenarios to online play, AIR WARRIOR III has created a defining moment for all games of its genre. Until now, with the exception of formal scenarios, play has been politically correct, using letters for country names and making any plane available to any gamer. The only goal? Kill or be killed. Now, however, every evening on Gamestorm (**www.gamestorm.com**), at regularly scheduled starting times in arenas with up to 250 participants, gamers can choose historical sides, equip themselves with the correct aircraft and fly missions that re-create those actually flown during the war. These missions have specific, chronicled objectives, with scoring based on how well each side achieves its goals. Combat flying moves from a self-centered, abstract goal of maximizing your personal kill-ratio to a structured environment that emphasizes concrete group goals.

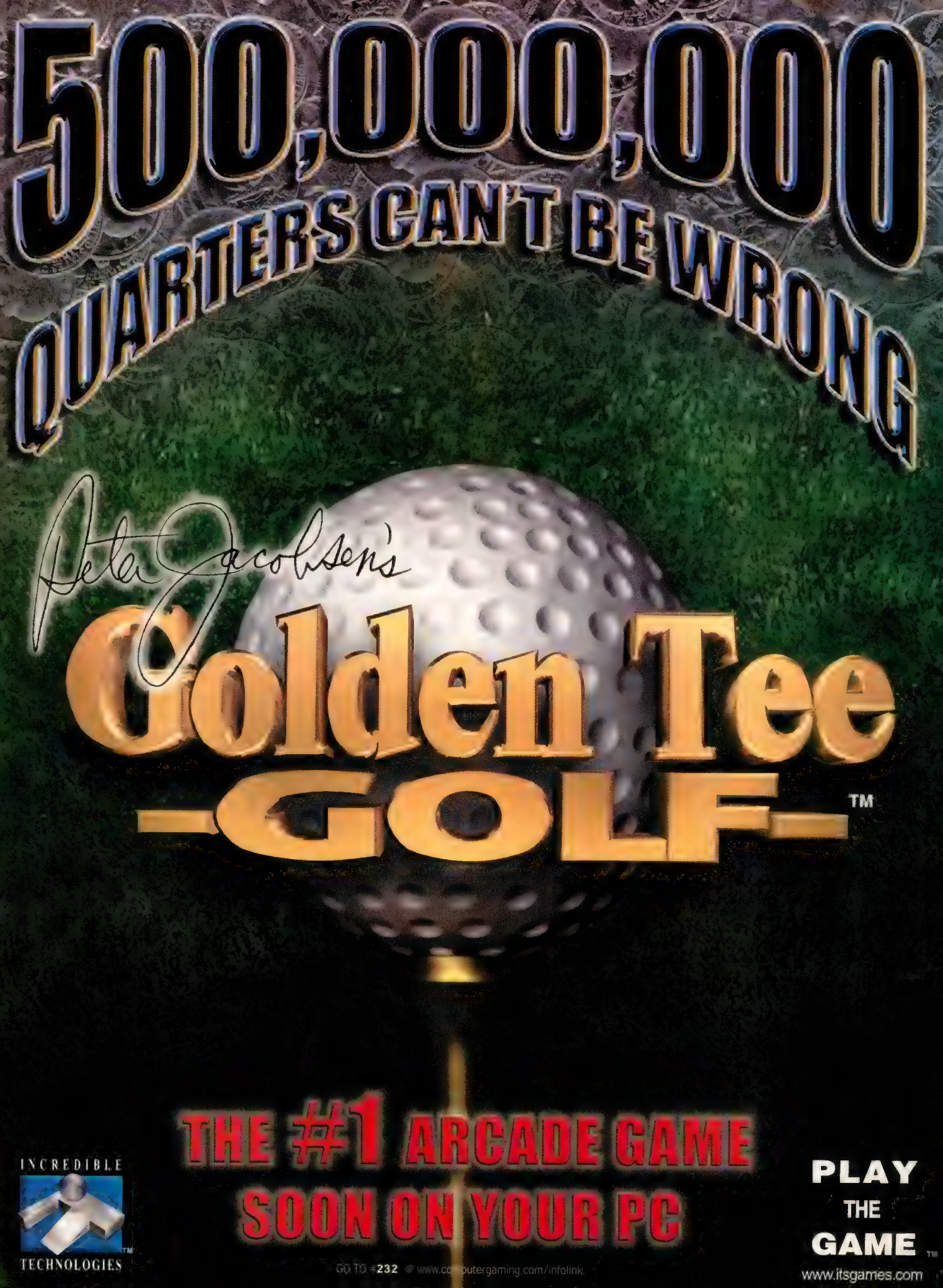
This transition adds an important element to online air combat: Gamers will finally experience a hint of the pressures and limitations felt by WWII crews. This improvement can't be overemphasized; "continuous furball" arenas are becoming stale. Adding to this heightened "environmental realism" is real-time voice capability. This feature is highly desirable in any team-oriented air combat arena and should make the historical scenarios even more pulse-pounding.

APPEAL: **Any devoted AIR WARRIOR fan or air-combat enthusiast looking for a long affair with historical missions from WWI to Korea.**

PROS: **3D planes and terrain enhance old warhorse's looks; new WWII Pacific campaigns; new enemy AI; good full-cockpit view; online historical missions; voice capability.**

CONS: **Flight model showing age; superb plane graphics not visible until unrealistically close; "realism" effects are more difficulty than realism.**

CG RATED



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DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY

Pretty Vacant

VR BASEBALL Looks Awesome, but the Feature Roster Is Light

by Scott A. May

Interplay's long-awaited VR BASEBALL is finally here in a hardware-only accelerated version. With its incredible speed and visual appeal, it rivals (and in many cases, surpasses) the best hardball coin-op machines. Before baseball realists cry foul, however, let's get one thing perfectly clear: This edition of VR BASEBALL focuses solely on arcade action, with little or no coaching or managerial aspects. It's also missing other crucial features, such as remote multiplayer support and instant replays.

The game features more than 700 MLB players, including All-Star rosters, based—a little late—on the 1996 season. There are also 28 major league stadiums, accurately modeled with familiar landmarks, skylines, billboards, and so on.

Play modes include exhibition, season, Home Run Derby, and batting practice. Options allow you to adjust skill levels (rookie, veteran, and all-star), innings (1–9), game time, errors, and designated hitter rules. Other options let you choose to simulate or play quarter-, half-, three-quarter, or full-season schedules, including all-star games, play-offs, and the World Series.

Player trades and roster management are about as close as you'll get to true coaching duties, although trading with the computer is a joke. All trades are immediately accepted, no matter how ridiculous.

GOOD EYE

The game requires a 3D-accelerated video card, but it's well worth it, both for the speed and graphic effects, which include real-time shadow casting, bilinear filtering, and extensive texture-mapping. The game runs fine on the minimum required system, and absolutely smokes on my P233 MMX, using Creative's 3D Blaster or Diamond's 3D Monster. Interplay has a patch enabling support for the Matrox Mystique 4MB video card.

Game graphics are purely polygonal, rendered at 640x480 resolution and 16-bit color depth. The players are large and angular, and they sport authentic uniforms, complete with names and numbers. Motion-capture technology gives all players a full range of natural movement.

VR BASEBALL uses a menuless control system for selecting and delivering pitches, swinging the bat, and advancing base runners. Joystick and gamepad controls are tight and responsive, featuring up to six programmable buttons. Actual gameplay, however, is far too easy at the rookie and veteran skill levels, even for an arcade game. In fact, my first inning at bat yielded no fewer than four home runs and six scores—even when the game was set to veteran level.

There's no instant replay, but the game's action can be viewed from any angle or position within each 360-degree virtual stadium. Although it looks cool, it's quite impractical. For example, it's almost impossible to pitch with any degree of accuracy when viewing the action from any angle other than the pitcher's. Still, the feature adds impressive depth of field.

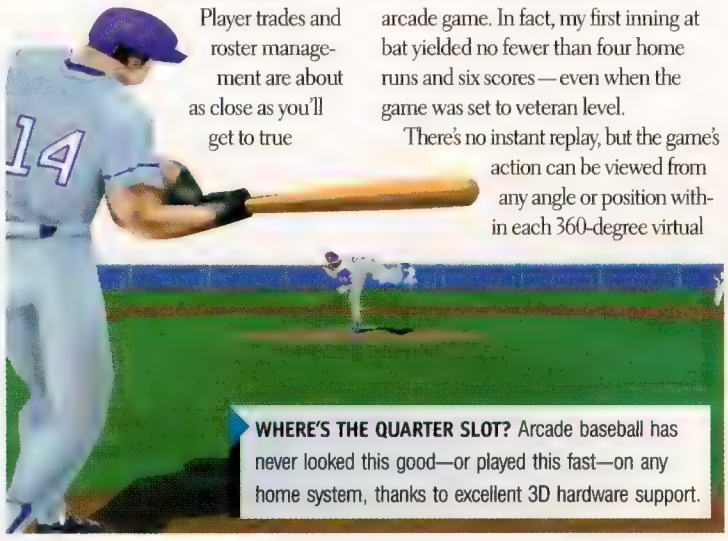
10TH MAN OUT VR BASEBALL's 360-degree environment and limitless camera settings create a virtual play field, putting players in the action.

FINAL OUT

Other downsides include rather "dirty" ambient sound effects when played through my SoundBlaster 64 AWE. Collision detection with back walls is also a problem. Sometimes the ball appears headed for the wall, only to become a home run. Likewise, fielders don't visibly catch balls, but merely "obtain" them by being in their vicinity.

VR BASEBALL delivers fast and fluid arcade baseball, but it's missing too many features. Let's hope VR BASEBALL '99, due out by the time you read this, will plug this game's many holes.

Price: $39.95
System Requirements: Pentium 120; Windows 95; 16MB RAM; 30MB hard-drive space; 4x CD-ROM; Win 95–compatible, 16-bit sound card.
3D Support: 3Dfx, Rendition V1000, Rendition V2200, or ATI Rage 3D Pro.
Multiplayer Support: Hotseat (2 players)
Designer: VR Sports
Publisher: Interplay Productions
Irvine, CA
(800) 468-3775
www.vrsports.com



WHERE'S THE QUARTER SLOT? Arcade baseball has never looked this good—or played this fast—on any home system, thanks to excellent 3D hardware support.

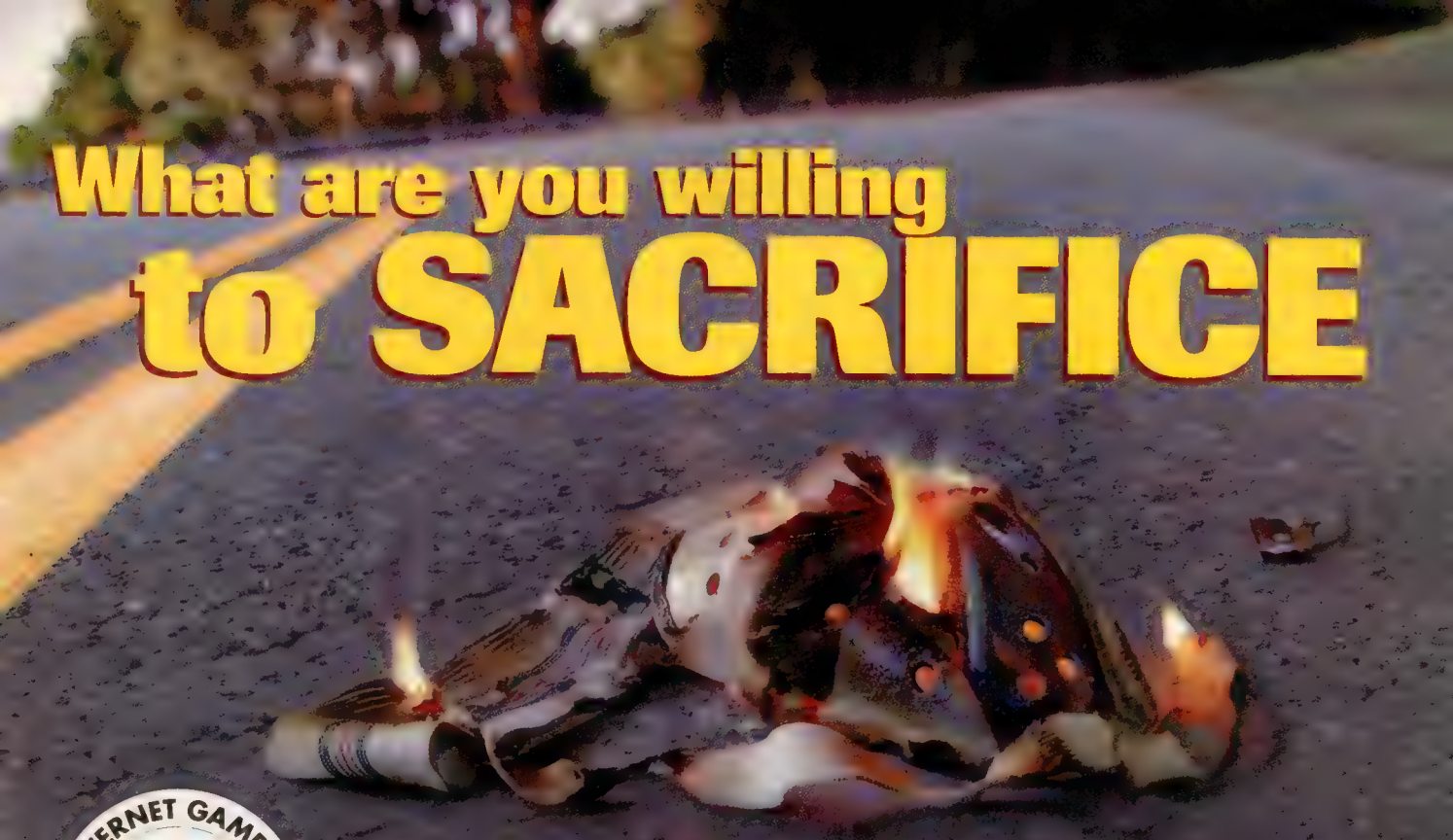
APPEAL: Arcade baseball fans.

PROS: Coin-op–quality 3D graphics and sound; exceptionally fast, smooth gameplay; simple play mechanics.

CONS: Almost no managerial control; no roster editor; too easy except at highest skill setting; no remote or network play; no instant reply.

CGW RATED ★★½

What are you willing to SACRIFICE



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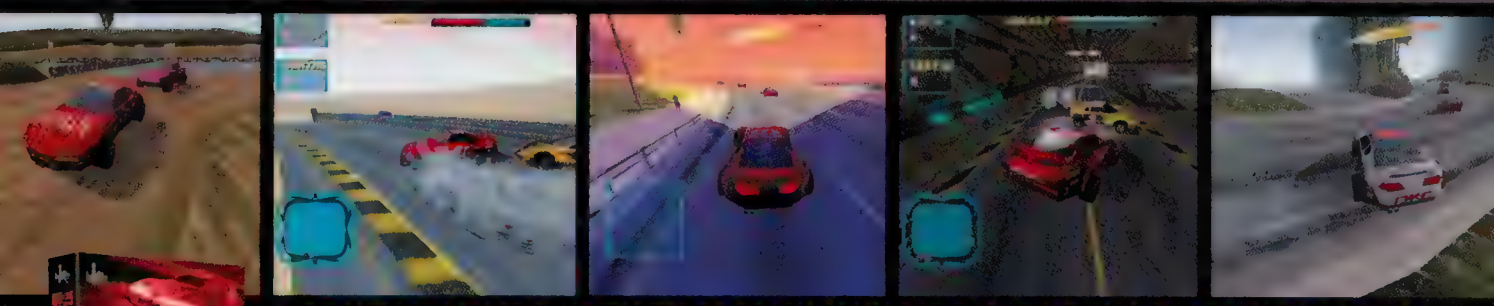

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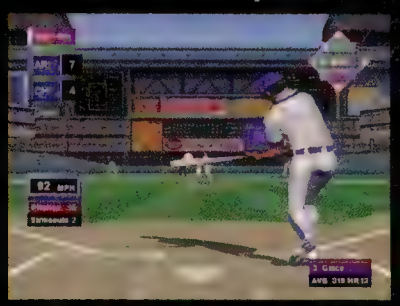

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PLAYERS

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DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY

Wheel Life

More Arcade Game Than Simulation, ANDRETTI RACING Still Offers Some Fast-paced Thrills

by Scott A. May

When in doubt, straddle the line. That's what Electronic Arts does with ANDRETTI RACING, which falls somewhere between the arcade thrills of NEED FOR SPEED and the simulated realism of CART PRECISION RACING. Driving the middle of this road can be twice as dangerous, but EA pulls it off.

The game marks EA's second attempt to jump-start one of its minor PC sports franchises, buoyed by success on the PlayStation and Saturn. ANDRETTI is no-holds-barred, thrill-a-minute arcade racing, with only a smattering of simulated realism, thankfully administered where it really counts: vehicle handling and computer AI. Drivers can choose between two disparate racing styles, NASCAR or Indy, which says a lot about the depth of the game's driving model.

I'LL TAKE THE PINTO

From the get-go, realism takes a backseat, as only four of the game's 16 tracks are modeled after officially licensed world-class speedways. The rest are fantasy tracks, designed by the Andretti clan (Mario and sons Jeff and Michael) to recreate track types based on real-world courses. Likewise, only a handful of the game's 30 drivers has any connection to real-life Indy or NASCAR drivers.

Prerace vehicle setup is also a bit of a joke. Compared to the best racing sims available today, the garage in ANDRETTI RACING is the digital equivalent of Jiffy Lube: fast, cheap, and very basic. Setup options are limited to automatic/manual transmissions, hard/soft tires, gear ratios, front/rear wing angles, and initial fuel loads. To make matters worse, you must reset your setups before each session.

On the upside, ANDRETTI RACING is a screamer when the tires finally hit the tarmac—if you have the necessary hardware. The game supports a small variety of 3D-accelerated video cards, and you'll need one if your system qualifies at the minimum required P133. On my P233 MMX, first tested without 3D video, frame rates were exceptionally high, although graphic quality suffers. With a Monster 3D, I was able to crank up the graphic details to high, while maintaining blazing speed. Beyond 3D effects like haze, lens flares, and textured backdrops, however, you'll also see plenty of flat, 2D objects littering the scenery.

SPIN CONTROL

As in many arcade-style racing games, your onscreen vehicle looks and feels as if it's floating slightly above the surface. Despite this, vehicle control is above average, thanks to the relaxed physics model. I tested the game using a CH Gamestick 14, CH Racing Wheel (with pedals), SideWinder Force Feedback, and even my trusty old Gravis GamePad. All four performed well, though racing wheels or analog sticks are definitely preferred.

Final accolades go to the computer AI. Computer-controlled drivers consist of the usual assemblage of chumps—more road-kill than road-warrior—and a ragtag team of hotshots (more often than not, the Andrettis themselves) who manage to extend a challenge at every turn. As expected, the game's best moments come during head-to-head racing via modem, serial, or LAN multiplayer connections.

ANDRETTI RACING won't drive away more serious competition, and there's plenty available to blow it off the road. But it's not without merits, especially for arcade-oriented drivers looking for a quick fix with plenty of eye candy.

Price: $49.95
System Requirements: Pentium 133, Windows 95, 16MB RAM, 120MB hard-drive space, 2x CD-ROM drive; supports DirectSound-compatible sound cards, mouse, and force-feedback joysticks.
3D Support: Direct3D-compatible accelerated video cards (3Dfx Voodoo, Voodoo Rush, and nVidia RIVA 128).
Multiplayer Support: LAN (2–8 players), modem, and serial play (null modem cable required).
Designers: High Score Entertainment, Stormfront Studios
Publisher: EA Sports
San Mateo, CA
(800) 245-4525
www.easports.com

EDGED OUT One of ANDRETTI RACING's strengths is its aggressive computer AI. It's especially good in the final laps.

APPEAL: Arcade racing fans.

PROS: Surprisingly tenacious computer AI; exceptionally fast; excellent handling; 3D hardware, force feedback, and multiplayer support.

CONS: More fantasy racing than gritty realism; laughable car setup.

CG RATED ★★★★★

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Baseball Mogul doesn't place you on the mound or in the batter's box, but rather in the leather armchair of your favorite professional baseball team.

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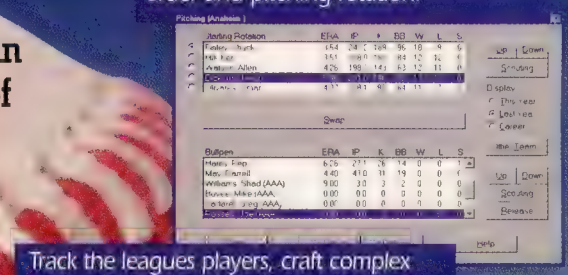

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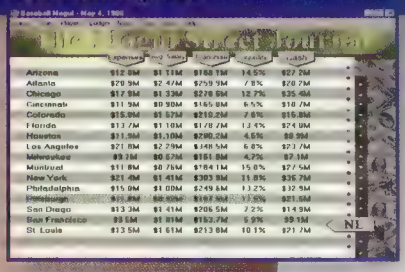

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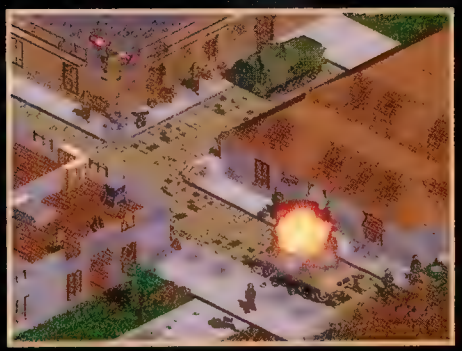

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Plumb More Depths

More Fun Awaits the Sadistic and Depraved Dungeon Keeper

by Barry Brenesal

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: ADVANCED

All your dungeons are now built, Dungeon Keeper. You succeeded and thrived against the onslaught of endless, sanctimonious heroes, and the blasphemous counterclaims of upstart rivals. You think you can sit back, toss another commoner on the fire, and revel in a bit of unaccustomed leisure time? Well, think again. More unexplored levels of challenge await you in THE DEEPER DUNGEONS, the DUNGEON KEEPER expansion pack from Bullfrog.

There are 30 new levels in all, 15 each for single-player and multiplayer games. The only obvious difference in their layouts lies in the close proximity, increased strength, and concentration of computer-driven enemies in the single-player scenarios.

WHACK A TROLL Train those monsters well, because DEEPER DUNGEONS provides more challenging scenarios than the original.

TIME TO SLAP MORE IMPS

You can play these 15 dungeons in any order. That in itself is the tip-off that there's no linear progression of difficulty in DEEPER DUNGEONS. Unlike in the original DUNGEON KEEPER, here there are no visuals of a land slowly decaying while you prosper in your campaign, and that wonderfully satiric Wellesian voice-over after each victory is missing as well. Instead, each dungeon is as reasonably hard as the last several dungeons in the original release.

Bullfrog claims to have achieved this in part through improvements to DEEPER DUNGEONS' enemy AI, but the evidence doesn't back this up. Liberated enemy dungeons still contain plenty of unused bonus specials, which, if used, would have granted free resurrections and level advances to all creatures. Individual creatures, including weak ones, continue to instantly attack the most powerful of enemy groups on sight. (There's nothing more pitiable than watching a Fly try to go it alone against three Dark Mistresses, two Bile Demons, and two Wizards.) Bullfrog also did nothing to eliminate the cheap tricks players could use to circumvent the computer's thinking—like luring a host of enemy troops onto a bridge over water or lava, then selling both ends, leaving most of them stranded.

EARNING YOUR KEEP

What makes individual levels in DEEPER DUNGEONS more difficult than the original game is object placement. There's less gold around you and more around enemy dungeons. There are more broad underground lakes and open caverns (which can't be closed by doors) near gold supplies, so that as soon as you tunnel into these gold pockets, higher level heroes and enemy dungeon keepers have easy access to your realm. Traps are more extensively deployed. Computerized dungeon keepers sometime receive room types and spells that human equivalents can't access on that given level.

This will no doubt engender some complaints about "AI cheating," but given the complexity of the game, even a Pentium chip couldn't process all the data required to adequately combat the strongest computer yet invented—the brain. Besides, has the challenge of an uphill battle ever been known to daunt a reasonably ambitious and depraved human dungeon keeper?

Thumbs up, then, for DEEPER DUNGEONS new levels. Just remember it's more of the same. It does not offer new monsters, rooms, or extensive graphics. What it does provide are 30 fresh challenges for DUNGEON KEEPER, that unique real-time strategy game of incredibly rich detail and sardonic humor.

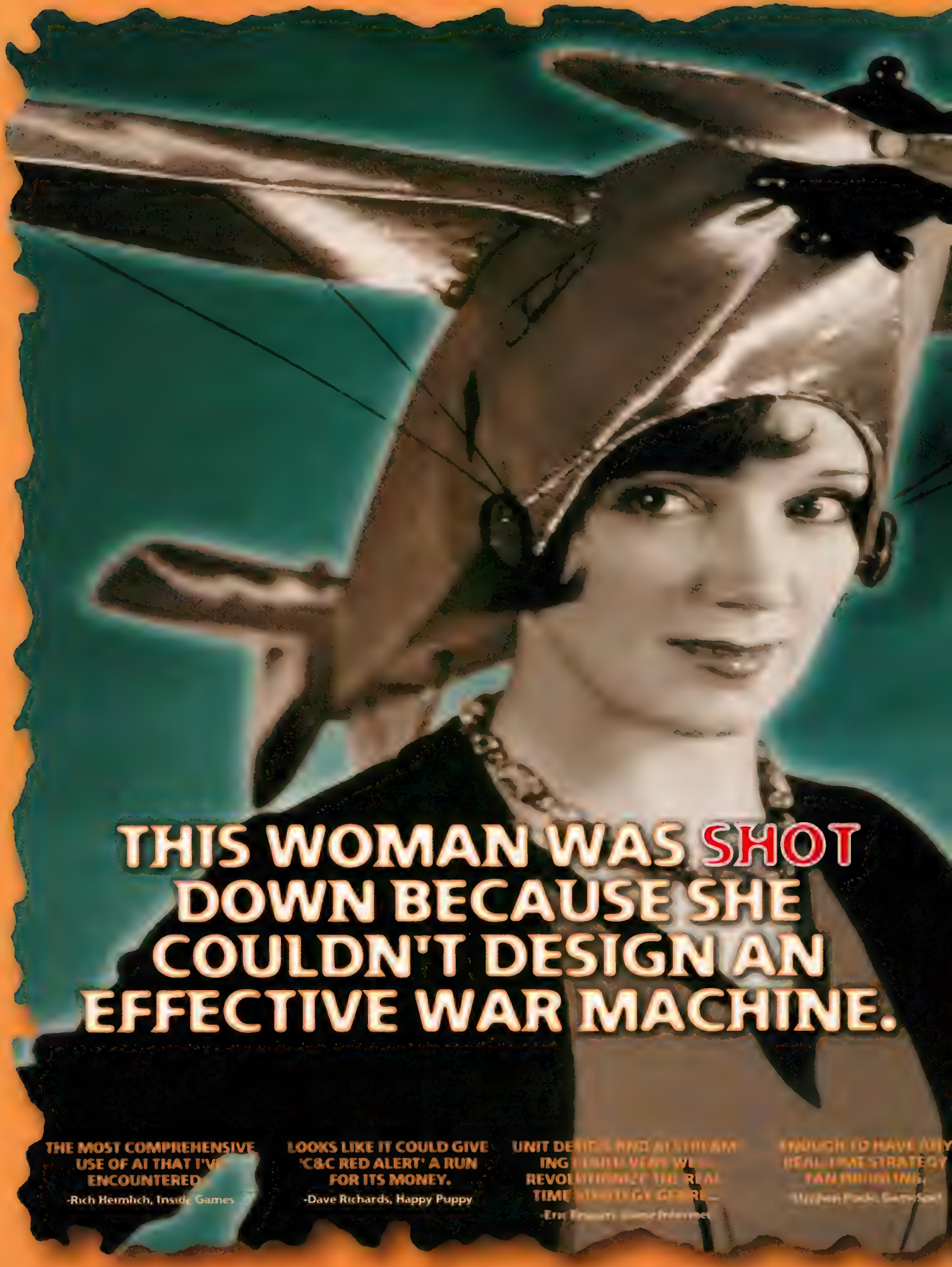
APPEAL: DUNGEON KEEPER addicts; anybody who enjoys difficult, imaginative real-time strategy games.

PROS: Thirty well-crafted dungeon challenges.

CONS: Extremely tough to win even if you are familiar with DUNGEON KEEPER; offers no new monsters or rooms; lacks the wit of the original game.

CG RATED ★★★

Price: $29.95
System Requirements: Pentium 75 (for Windows 95 version) or 486DX4/10 (for DOS version), 16MB RAM (Windows 95 version) or 8MB RAM (DOS version), 4x CD-ROM, 17MB hard-drive space, DirectX3-supported sound and video card.
Multiplayer Support: Modem (2 players), LAN (2–4 players).
3D Support: None.
Designer: Bullfrog
Publisher: Electronic Arts
San Mateo, CA
(650) 571-7171
www.bullfrog.ea.com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-Rich Heimlich, Inside Games
LOOKS LIKE IT COULD GIVE 'C&C RED ALERT' A RUN FOR ITS MONEY.
-Dave Richards, Happy Puppy
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DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

Counterspell Please

by Tahsin Shamma

MANALINK, the much-anticipated multiplayer support included in the MAGIC upgrade, DUELS OF THE PLANESWALKERS, has finally arrived. Unfortunately, it's most likely going to give you a bad case of mana burn.

The worst problem with MANALINK is the interface. I've yet to see a less intuitive, more complicated interface for any multiplayer game. Basically, the multiplayer component is split into two windows: The first is the chat room accessed through TEN; the second connects you to players for duels. This may seem simple, but awkward buttons and an illogical messaging system make chatting and setting up duels a chore.

The second problem with DUELS OF THE PLANESWALKERS is the unimpressive selection of new cards. While it is supposed to be an expansion pack with new cards from the *Legends* and *Dark* expansions, MicroProse neglected to mention that you don't even get a third of each set. Absent are the gold-bordered "Legends" cards that made those expansions worthwhile in the first place.

DUELS OF THE PLANESWALKERS has one saving grace: It's the only program that lets you play *Magic* over the Internet in an automatically adjudicated environment. However, if you play *Magic* regularly and are comfortable using chat programs like mIRC, you'll probably *love* APPRENTICE 32 (available free at **www.planeswalker.com**). APPRENTICE won't help you figure out Banding, but it does provide one of the easiest interfaces for playing *Magic* over the Internet.

As for DUELS OF THE PLANESWALKERS, it delivers on its promises—that is, if you can get past the awkward interface and the lack of good *Legends* and *Dark* expansion cards.

INTERRUPT THIS! MANALINK's interface leaves a little friendliness to be desired.

APPEAL: Gamers who play *Magic: The Gathering* only on the PC

PROS: Some new cards; multiplayer support.

CONS: Poor interface; great cards from the expansions are not available.

CG RATED

CG-ROM

Look for MANALINK on this month's CG-ROM

Price: $48.99
System Requirements: 486DX4/100, Windows 95, 16MB RAM.
Multiplayer Support: Modem, LAN, TEN (2 players).
3D Support: None.
Publisher: MicroProse
Alameda, CA
(510) 864-4550
www.microprose.com

Actual screen captures using Links LS 1998

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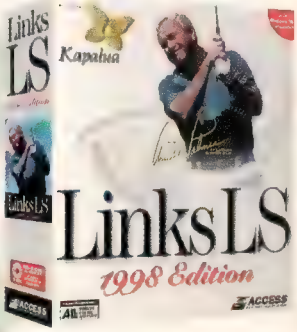

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DIFFICULTY LEVEL: ADVANCED

Email Wars

AIDE DE CAMP 2 Is Indispensable for Board Wargamers

by Terry Coleman

Many wargamers lead a double life. By day, they upgrade their PCs just as frantically as other gamers, so that they can play PANZER GENERAL II, MYTH, and SID MEIER'S GETTYSBURG. But late at night, when no one else is watching, they sneak up to the attic and dust off their treasured collection of board wargames. They fondle the paper maps of Waterloo and Aachen, and spray laminate on their cardboard counters of Napoleon's Grand Armee in a vain attempt to halt the ravages of time. But for most of these gamers, the harsh realities of jobs, families, and wargaming buddies who move away have dealt their cardboard armies a defeat that Wellington could never have imagined.

If you grew up playing *Axis & Allies* or *Squad Leader*, you'll soon be able to play computer versions of those classic wargames. But what about *Afrika Corps*, *Napoleon at Waterloo*, or the dozens (or even hundreds) of other excellent board wargames that you own, most of which are hardly likely to interest a computer game publisher? Well, with a little patience, you can now convert them all to Windows 95 applications with AIDE DE CAMP 2 (ADC 2).

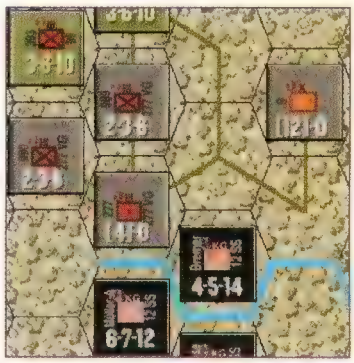
A sequel to the powerful editing program that won a *CGW* Special Achievement Award three years ago, ADC 2 is quite simply the Holy Grail for wargamers. Mind you, ADC 2 won't magically put an AI in your boardgame conversion, nor will it change turn-based games to real-time. But if you convert *Harpoon 4*, for example, you'll get an exact reproduction of the miniatures game—which will vary quite a bit from the HARPOON 4 that SSI will publish next year.

NO GRIDLOCK HERE

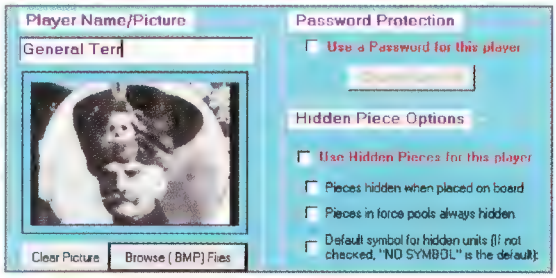
You aren't limited to generating endless hexgrids, either. Included with ADC 2 are a chess set, a backgammon set, and a checkers set, all designed with the ADC 2 editor. The powerful 256-color editor handles squares, boxes, hexagons, point-to-point movement, and even jagged coastlines with ease—up to 60,000 spaces per map, easily larger than any boardgame or computer wargame yet designed.

Units can have as many as 16 editable characteristics, comparable to a typical unit in PANZER GENERAL or STEEL PANTHERS. With the potential to define 30,000 types of units, ADC 2 can handle virtually any boardgame now on the market (or likely to be designed anytime soon). There are a number of other nice touches, such as security passwords, hidden unit options, a random draw function (for games with variable initiative), and a built in Line-of-Sight algorithm that's better than a lot of professionally published games I've played. You can even design *cards*!

Is it perfect? Some of my old ADC files didn't convert, but the new palette is so improved that I would probably have redone them to the new format anyway. There is a bit of a learning curve, and some gamers will find the lack of a paper manual annoying. Still, the tutorials and context-sensitive help files are thorough, and the big problem is really assimilating the vast number of available options. For my part, ADC 2 potentially adds 500 play-by-email games to my collection, and it even rolls the dice for me. What more can you ask, especially when new ADC 2 conversions of classic wargames pop up on the Internet on almost a daily basis?



TRAFFIC JAM Included is a copy of *Ardennes* from The Gamers. Even in close zoom, you can see that this boardgame conversion looks quite professional.


Player Name/Picture
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Password Protection
Use a Password for this player
Hidden Piece Options
Use Hidden Pieces for this player
Pieces hidden when placed on board
Pieces in force pools always hidden
Default symbol for hidden units (if not checked, "NO SYMBOL" is the default)
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Browse (.BMP) Files

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Price: $59.95
System Requirements: 486 PC, Windows 95, 16MB RAM, 20MB hard-drive space, 16-bit SVGA graphics.
3D Support: None.
Multiplayer Support: Email only (number of players varies by game converted).
Developer: HPS Simulations
Publisher: HPS Simulations
Santa Clara, CA
(408) 554-8381
www.hpssims.com

Note that ADC 2 does not provide you with any rules or AI. Aside from any question of copyright, to play games via ADC 2, you must own a copy of the boardgame in question, and it allows play only via email.

APPEAL: Anyone who wants to play paper games via email.

PROS: A play-by-email wargamer's dream come true; improved in every way over the original ADC.

CONS: No paper manual; old ADC sets may not convert to new format.

CG RATED ★★★★

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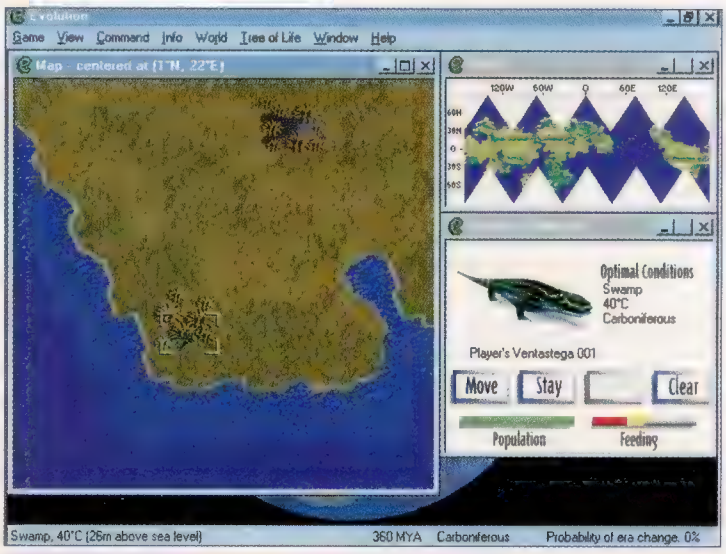
Try Again, Darwin

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

Discovery Channel's Simulation of the Struggles of Prehistoric Life Takes a Giant Step Backward

by Tahsin Shamma

Maxis Software started a new era in simulation games when it unveiled its SIM line of strategy games. The series presented you with mundane systems (city management, farming, global geology, and ecology), and then gave you godlike powers to manage and control them. Now, Discovery Channel Multimedia is trying to walk the same road with its epoch-spanning life simulation, EVOLUTION. Unfortunately, this is one animal whose mutations doom it to extinction.



JUST OUTTA DA POND! Alas, in EVOLUTION, we must all start as lowly amphibians.

SIMEVOLUTION

At first glance, this game feels a little like SIMLIFE and SIMEARTH. However, this real-time title has a level of competition missing in those two games. Unlike its ancestors, EVOLUTION pits gamers against each other to see whose clade (the species hierarchy) will survive through the ages to achieve intelligence. The most important control you have in the game is the manipulation of feeding habits and evolutionary instincts. While SIMLIFE allowed you to select and create animals, gene by gene, in EVOLUTION you guide prehistorically accurate creatures from preland existence to sentience.

This task is especially difficult because you not only have to compete against your opponent's animals for feeding grounds, but you also must deal with climatic and tectonic changes that occur in the game world. Besides this, random disasters occasionally threaten to drive species to extinction.

The complexity of this game lies in the evolution of creatures. As the species change, so do their feeding habits and their climatic preferences. Animals that once loved the desert winds might later seek refuge from them. At times, it is also necessary to evolve predators (the only animals that can attack) to reduce the population of your opponent's clade. It is this constant struggle that keeps gamers on their toes.

AGE OF ANIMAL HERDING

As a teaching tool, EVOLUTION is close to SIMLIFE, even if it doesn't have the added complexity of genetic experimentation. However, as a game, EVOLUTION feels like it should be called "Age of Animal Herding." The majority of your time is spent moving animals from one location to the next while trying to keep them from extinction (unless they're too outdated to survive). Gamers get points for evolving new species, and once one player has evolved a particular species, the other players can't evolve into it. The Tree of Life (a massive display of all the evolution paths in the game) shows you which species to evolve, but the pathways are so complex that it's hard to tell where each evolutionary line goes. In addition, the sheer number of species makes the game daunting for anyone except the amateur paleontologist.

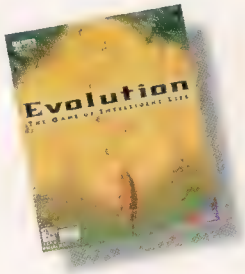
What EVOLUTION needs most is an injection of fun. Sure, herding an Ornithosuchus next to a Lystrosaurus to make room for the Zalambdalestes and Rhamphorhynchus is cool, but it gets tiresome after a while. The evolutionary strategy that the game requires just isn't exciting enough. Unless you find paleontology and zoology fascinating, you'll probably agree that EVOLUTION is for the birds.

APPEAL: Would-be biologists and paleontologists tired of reading about the subject.

PROS: Lots to learn; a true feel for the complexities of evolution, without a lot of biology lessons; multiplayer play.

CONS: Not much game control; it can be tedious work moving animals; little strategic fun.

CG RATED



Price: $44
System Requirements: Pentium 60, Windows 95, 16MB RAM, 10MB hard-drive space, 2x CD-ROM drive, SVGA graphics (8-bit color), Windows-compatible sound card.
3D Support: None.
Multiplayer Support: Modem (2 players), Internet, LAN (2–6 players); 1 CD per player.
Developer: Crossover Technologies
Publisher: Discovery Channel Multimedia
Bethesda, MD
(301) 986-1999
evolution.discovery.com

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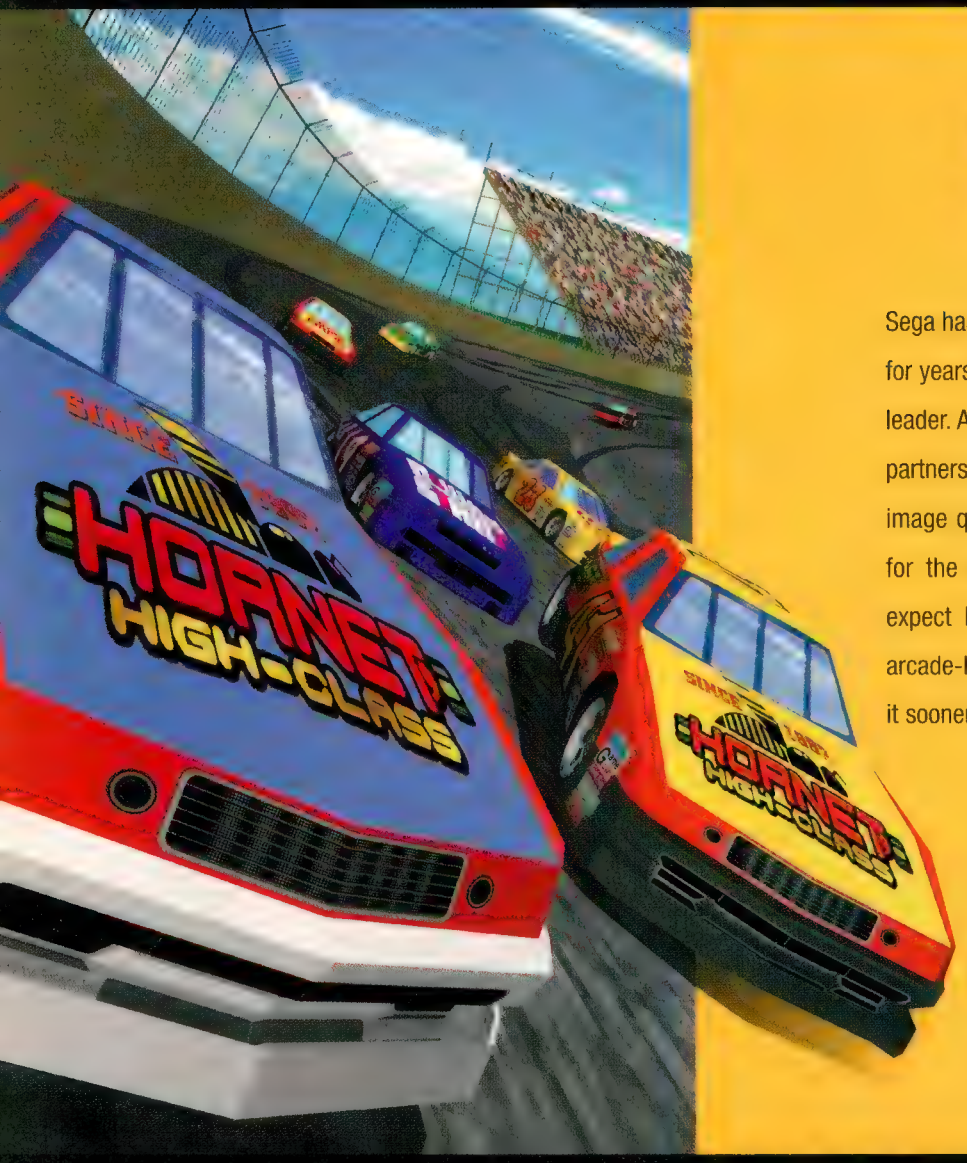

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Life Stinks

Search in the Gutters for the Meaning of Life

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY

by Charles Ardai

Having spent my youth with one foot in the science-fiction fan community and the other in the world of Internet geeks, I've had plenty of exposure to *Monty Python*. Both communities have made a fetish out of reciting *Python* sketches from memory. Walk down a corridor at a convention and you're sure to hear earnest young men belting out sketches from *Monty Python's Flying Circus* or bits from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

What you'll rarely hear, though, are bits from *Monty Python's The Meaning of Life*. The reason is simple: This film, released in 1983 to a decidedly mixed reaction from fans and critics alike, was only sporadically funny and more than sporadically stomach-turning. But in searching for new material to adapt, 7th Level—which has already made games out of *Flying Circus* and *Holy Grail*—was bound to find *The Meaning of Life*.

STEADY ON, OLD CHAP Put on your surgeon's jacket and try your hand at a live organ transplant; shaky surgeons risk drowning in their patient's blood.

PUTTING THE "MEAN" IN *MEANING*

What everyone remembers from the film is the scene in which the world's fattest man vomits all over and then explodes, spewing his innards in all directions. Unfortunately, this scene is not atypical—the live liver transplant scene is just one other example of the movie's grossness.

Both scenes appear in 7th Level's game adaptation of *The Meaning of Life*, and one's transformation from viewer to participant does not improve them. Quite the opposite, in fact: Now you're the one feeding the vomiting glutton till he explodes and carving on the torso of an unwilling "volunteer" until his blood covers your computer screen. I have a strong stomach and a liberal sense of humor, but this was too much even for me.

One is expected to use the mouse to follow a zigzagging surgical line with the sharp implement of one's choosing (scalpel, sickle, hatchet, drill, etc.) while the "patient" screams in agony. I am not ashamed to say that my hand shook, forcing me to replay the sequence more than 20 times. I don't want to meet the man whose hand remained steady enough to complete this gruesome task on the first try.

The fat-man scene has a different problem: Even ignoring the fact that projectile vomiting is an unpleasant thing to watch, the only game element inserted into the scene is the sorriest of grade-school puzzles. Waiter John Cleese balances a mountain of serving platters in one hand, each marked with a triangle, square, rectangle, or circle. The gamer's job is to remove platters one at a time without destroying the balance. (It takes all of a minute to figure out that triangle platters are the lightest, squares weigh twice as much, circles three times, and rectangles four times. Once you know that, the puzzle is trivial.)

The first half of the game consists almost entirely of puzzles like this, intermingled with unbearable scenes in which you have to click first on one actor and then another to get them to perform their lines from the movie. Long stretches of dialogue not only get recited but get repeated, over and over again. There are some funny bits, such as a dead-on parody of YOU DON'T KNOW JACK, but even these wear thin when you have to sit through them a third or fourth time.

In the second half, the game takes a very odd turn, exchanging the world and storyline of the movie for a largely unrelated, surreal fantasy world. Here one finds fewer tiresome dialogue bits, more interesting puzzles, and satire that is edgy and controversial without being repulsive.

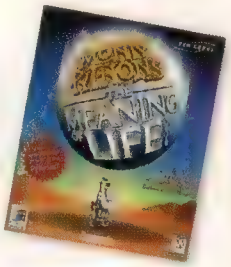
Why was the good stuff saved for the second CD? Lord only knows, but that's where it is, and there's no way to get to it without going through the dreck. Alas, unlike with the video of *The Meaning of Life*, there's no fast-forward.

APPEAL: Passionate *Python* fans and lovers of the surreal.

PROS: The second half of the game is inventive; the instruction manual is hilarious.

CONS: The first half is a sluggish, revolting slog through familiar scenes and depressingly minor game sequences; both halves of the game are confusing and repetitive.

CG RATED ★★



Price: $29.95
System Requirements: Pentium 100, Windows 95, 16MB RAM, SVGA graphics, 4x CD-ROM, Windows-compatible soundcard.
3D Support: None.
Multiplayer Support: None.
Developer: 7th Level
Publisher: Panasonic Interactive Media
(888) 763-4433
www.pimcom.com
www.pythonline.com
www.7thlevel.com

★★ **REVIEW • STAR TREK: THE GAME SHOW**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY

You Don't Know Trek

by Charles Ardai

STAR TREK: THE GAME SHOW (ST:TGS) is an attempt to cash in on both YOU DON'T KNOW JACK and the obvious cachet of the *Star Trek* name. Like JACK, ST:TGS is a take-off on television game shows, complete with a self-absorbed host (John de Lancie as *The Next Generation*'s "Q"), several rounds of trivia questions, and (ST:TGS's only original contribution) a pretty female "Q" as co-host. ST:TGS is crammed with stills and sound effects from all the *Star Trek* TV series and movies. The result is a sure-fire hit, no? No.

What makes JACK so popular is how funny the host and the questions are. Here, the host is just boorish. John de Lancie tries his best to infuse life into a neither entertaining nor witty script.

The questions are even worse: Instead of asking funny things about *Star Trek* or even asking straight questions in a funny way, the game takes the dullest possible approach to the most uninteresting questions imaginable. To make matters more painful, the answer options are read out loud in a slow monotone. Guess wrong and all you get is a generic barb from Q and a robotic reading of the correct answer.

OBSCURE ALIENS No, we don't know who this guy is, either—all the more reason to avoid this game.

In addition, ST:TGS suffers from poor interface design. Whereas in JACK, players use a letter key to buzz in, but use a *number* key to select an answer, here answers are labeled with letters. This not only means that the buttons for the five choices are not next to each other on the keyboard, but also that a player might have to move his opponent's finger off his buzz-in button to answer.

In the end, *ST:TGS* has lots of *Star Trek* pictures. That's the best that can be said for it.

APPEAL: Only for those obsessed with owning every *Star Trek* prop.

PROS: *Star Trek* sound effects, music, and photos; John de Lancie as "Q."

CONS: Even *Trek* fans will be bored and annoyed by Q's unfunny badgering.

CG RATED ★★

Price: $39.95
Requirements: Pentium 90, Windows 95, 4X CD-ROM, 16MB RAM, SVGA Graphics
3D Support: None.
Multiplayer Support: Hotseat (2–3 players)
Publisher: Sound Source Interactive (800) 877-4778
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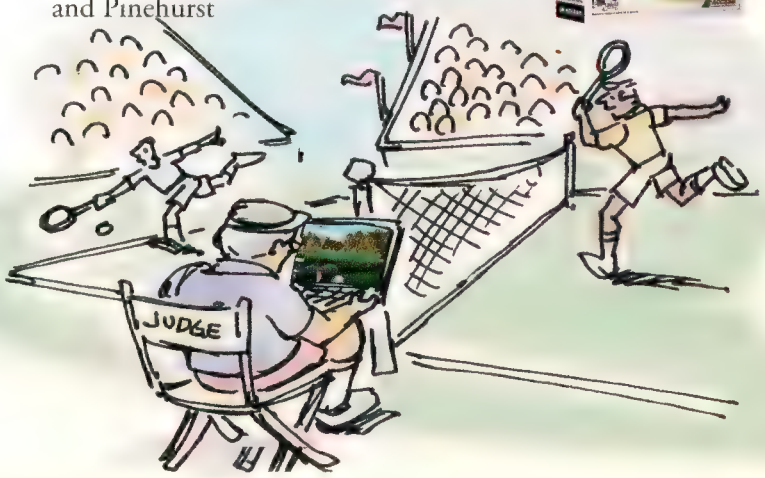

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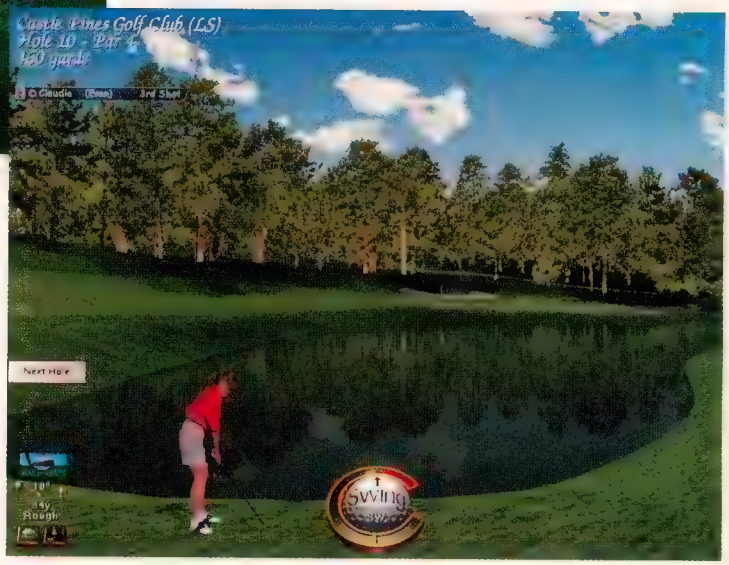
Real Life PALES by Comparison



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STRATEGY & TIPS

Wing Commander Prophecy

An Academy Refresher Course for the Latest WING COMMANDER

by Thierry Nguyen

The Nephilim (or Kn'thrack if you speak the Kilrathi tongue) can be quite an intimidating foe. After all, they managed to destroy a Kilrathi fleet, create their own stargates, and just plain look really frightening. Only the *Midway* stands between them and the Confederation, and it's our duty to fight them off. But have no fear, our strategy guide will have you pounding the Nephilim menace into pulp in no time.No rookie should fly without reading these tips, and even some veterans might want to use it as a reference guide.

Missiles 101

While dogfighting still boils down to who can maneuver and aim the best, missiles can make or break a successful kill, if they're used correctly. PROPHECY retains some time-tested favorite missiles from the earlier games, while adding new toys for you to play with.

Dumbfires: There isn't much use for these. They're truly useful only when you're tailing an Alien craft that you know will remain in a straight line. If you're good enough, you can try to put in enough lead in case the target changes direction.

Rocket Pods: These are similar to the Dumbfires, but are slightly more useful by virtue of their quantity. You usually get 36 of these, and they provide decent backup firepower. Use them as a finishing touch for some of the tougher fighter craft or when you make strafing runs against Tritons and Barracudas.

Heat-Seekers: This is your standard missile on early missions, when you're a Diamondback. It actually deals more damage than the others, but is balanced by the fact that it's strictly rear-aspect. It's better to save these for Mantas and above, rather than wasting them against Morays.

Image-Recognition: This missile is your arsenal's true backbone, as almost every ship carries four to six of them (the Vampire packs even more). Save these until you get relatively close to your target, since the Aliens (especially the Devil Ray) are smart enough to use their decoys at the right time. Later, you'll get a long-range version that lets you lock on from 17 klicks away.

Friend-or-Foe: The Friend-or-Foe serves as more of a defensive tool. You can't designate a target for it, but you can try to point it toward your intended victim. Try using it when you're being chased: It always goes after the nearest enemy craft, which will (logically) be your pursuer. This is useful if you're flying a strike or bomber ship and you're being harassed by fighters.

Advanced Tactics 500

Below are a few tips to help you get through some of the missions, since they can be a bit hairy. In order to prevent spoilers, each mission is referred to by system and number, so just look for the ones you need.

T'Lan Meth 416.3

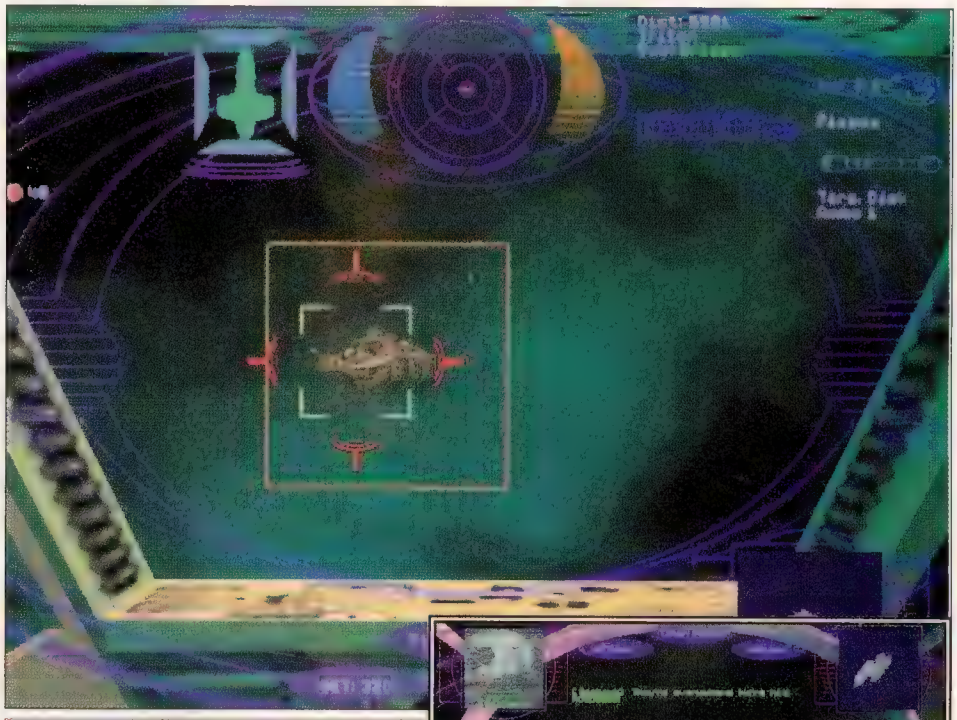
It doesn't actually matter whether you win or lose the mission, the outcome is the same. Since Stiletto finds the jamming device, there's no need to worry about it. But if you want to find it for yourself, the strategy is simple: Leave Stiletto to fend for herself, and find the jamming device while she takes care of the Aliens. When you arrive in the field filled with unknown devices, press Ctrl-T to deactivate smart targeting. Then select each device and afterburn to it in order to inspect it. The location of the jamming device is completely random: Sometimes it's the first thing you inspect; other times it's the last.

HARM: Use these only against turrets on capital ships. One will usually severely damage a turret, and you can then follow with another missile or a burst of the guns. The HARM also becomes available in a longer-range version, allowing you to demolish those turrets from a safer distance.

Torpedoes: There are two kinds: light and heavy. The light torpedoes can be used on almost any part of any capital ship, but you should reserve the heavy ones (since you generally get only two) for the engine and the bridge of your primary target (usually the biggest ship in the area).

Tracker MIRV Missiles: This is basically four Friend-or-Foes tied together. Fire this single missile into a cluster of enemies. After about 5 klicks, it will separate into four missiles, each of which seeks targets on its own. It's a good way to damage multiple enemies at once.

Swarmers: Found only on the Wasp, Swarmers fire multiple missiles at one target. Save them for the big opponents, such as Skates and Devil Rays, since they will converge on the target and be unaffected by normal countermeasures.

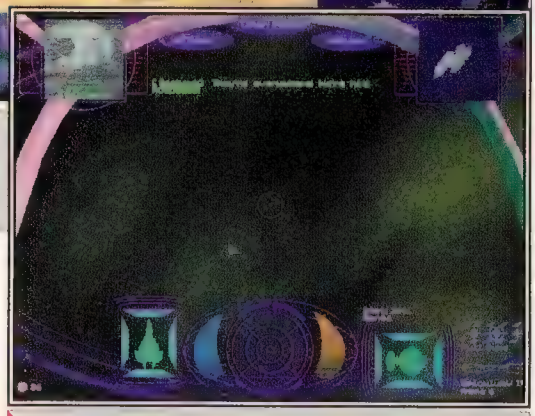


SPEAR THE TRITON Once you've cleared out the Barracuda and any fighters chasing you, tag the Triton and flee.

Porcupine Mines: This is a defensive tool for bombers and strike craft; release one or two when you're being chased.

Tactics 205

PROPHECY returns to the WING COMMANDER II style of gameplay, so there aren't that



MEDDLING MANTAS In many missions, such as this one involving an SWACS scan, the Mantas are the biggest threat to whatever you're protecting.

T'Lan Meth 417.4

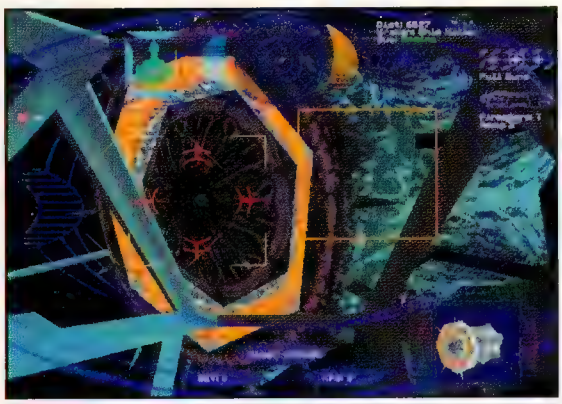
Devil Rays are the key to this mission. Flown by Ace pilots, they are the ships that go out and capture humans (including Blair). A minute or so after you enter the area where the lost pilot is, a Devil Ray will show up. Kill it as soon as possible or cause enough damage to drive it away. Once it's gone, clear the area of other ships and let the SAR pick up the lost pilot.

T'Lan Meth 423.8

Again, this is a matter of fighting enemies in the right order. Hit the Mantas hard and fast, then move on to the Morays and the other craft. This is the first time the Lamprey makes an appearance, but don't worry about it. Try to save the Rays for last, but if they start to fire on the Seahawk, fire a few shots to harass them so that they focus on you instead.

Hrissith 640.8

Your biggest threat comes from the Mantas and Morays pestering you, and from that Barracuda circling nearby. Try to shake off the fighters or call for help, and use some well-aimed and well-timed plasma bursts to take down the Barracuda. Once it's gone, try to jink your way to the Triton, the target for your disk. As soon as you lock on and fire the disk, immediately turn back to the *Midway* and afterburn to it, so that you don't get caught in the plasma blast.



WATCH THE ENGINE WASH Every enemy capital ship, even the mighty Kraken Ship-Killer, has a blind spot behind its engines.

many missions that provide truly unique challenges. Instead, missions follow a basic structure within which some general tactics can often lead to victory. We'll give you the basic templates to follow for many missions and then go into tips for some of the trickier missions.

Every mission has a basic sequence for fighting the Alien ships: Fight Mantas first and then everyone else. No matter what kind of mission you're on, the Mantas are the most dangerous target. They are the ones carrying torpedoes (the red ones in particular) or they are the ships that have been ordered to attack whatever you're escorting or protecting. Skates and Combined Stingrays (when three smaller Stingrays become one) are also powerful enough to attack the *Midway* or other capital craft. Take care of them and then proceed to destroy all other types at your leisure. Save the Rays for last, however, since they separate into approximately eight annoying Remoras upon destruction.

When you're attacking capital ships as a fighter escort, you only need to make an occasional strafing run against the turrets. The *Midway* sends enough bombers with you that they can usually take care of the ship by themselves. You should concern yourself instead with fighter craft. As a bomber, you need to target three components: the shield emitters, the bridge, and the engine. Make strafing runs against the shield emitters, and then torpedo the bridge and the engine. You might want to take out the engine yourself and delegate the destruction of the bridge to your wingmen. Since every ship has a blind spot right behind the engine, you can fly right up to it and pump two heavy torpedoes into it without much trouble.

Finally, be sure you're at your best during those missions involving the *Midway*. Damage to the *Midway* carries over to subsequent missions. If the ship gets severely banged up early on, it could die quite easily in later missions (such as "Holding the Line"). Should that happen, you'll have to replay the earlier *Midway* missions to make sure your ship doesn't get too damaged.

DEVILISH DESTRUCTION Fly in the simulator and see how well you'd do in your very own Devil Ray, complete with Alien guns and excellent maneuverability.

The Power of Sivar

Okay, you've set the difficulty to "Rookie," and you've even checked that "invulnerability" box in the options menu. But you're still getting worked over by Mantas and Devil Rays. Or maybe you finished the game, but you feel like being a demigod for your next go-around. Whatever the case, now is the time to cheat.

To activate these codes, just type them in; they should take effect immediately. If you're worried about activating different ship functions while typing them in, just hold down the Shift key while you type.

goodtarget: This code turns your targeting system into that of a turret. Now every enemy target and missile is easily marked on screen.

moretunes: Enables the "radio," which allows you to select individual Cobalt 60 or Orchestral tracks during spaceflight.

alswantsmoreships: Type this code at the simulator mission selection screen and you'll be allowed to fly Kilrathi *and* Alien craft in the simulator. Press Z to switch between the list of Confed Craft and Other Craft. See for yourself how much fun it is to fly the Devil Ray.

dynomite: This is the traditional WING COMMANDER cheat, which activates a host of new options, outlined below:

Ctrl-I: Toggles invulnerability

Ctrl-K: Makes your ship self-destruct (may not work all the time).

Ctrl-C: Toggles collision detection (similar to invulnerability, since every object will move through you instead of hitting you).

Ctrl-F12: The infamous Finger of God, which will either reduce a target's shields or destroy it outright. When you target a capital ship, it will destroy the highlighted system. Kills with the Finger of God will not get you any credit on the killboard.

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STRATEGY & TIPS

Warhammer 40,000

Taking Steps Toward a FINAL LIBERATION From the Orks

by Samuel Baker II

Even though WARHAMMER 40,000: FINAL LIBERATION is a science-fiction game, it does a good job of stressing combined arms. Making the most of all branches of your military is the key to ultimate victory, especially when facing Ork hordes. Orks in WARHAMMER live and die by speed and big guns, but even their best units, such as the Lifta Droppa or the Kannon Speedsta, have thin armor—a weakness that can be exploited by a crafty general.

Since the Orks are faster, let them bring the battle to you, but don't be passive. When you are invading Ork-controlled territory, you have only one turn to be in position before much of the Ork horde is upon you. So, use all your movement points to advance that first turn as far as is practical toward your objectives. Afterward, creep forward and maintain good fields of fire. Remember, you can move any unit one square and still fire your full allotment of shots that turn.

TOO DANGEROUS TO LIVE Whenever you see the enemy's Lifta Droppa or Kannon Speedsta, kill them on sight—preferably with long-range artillery.

Infantry units are great for dealing with Ork bikers, and can double as cheap antiaircraft defense. Having a full company of two heavy-weapon and two regular-infantry platoons in your regiment will go far to keep Fighta-Bommerz and Ork bikers off your back. Deploy infantry on the front line, and dig in if possible. Then place heavy weapons just behind the infantry. That way your heavy weapons will start chewing up enemy bikers and infantry, softening them up for the infantry to finish off. When deploying troops, keep platoons together and don't let the squads become separated.

Sci-fi Tread-head Heaven

A good rule of thumb for heavy weapons in WARHAMMER: If it's on treads, leave it alone unless you have a rear shot; if it's on wheels, fire at the flanks and rear. You should fire at an enemy tank's front armor only as a last resort, particularly if you have any other opportunity fire available. Following are some tips on which armor to buy, and which to avoid:

Leman Russ and **Predator:** These are the best of the regular tanks; you should shoot for two platoons of these in your regiment. The Lemans are harder to kill, but have fewer weapons and are slower. Predators are faster and have more tank-killing guns. Tank bolters are nearly useless, so I don't recommend them.

Chimeras: These are worse than having no tanks at all. Their guns will tempt you into using them and their lack of armor ensures that they will die. Sell them. The infantry will do better on foot.

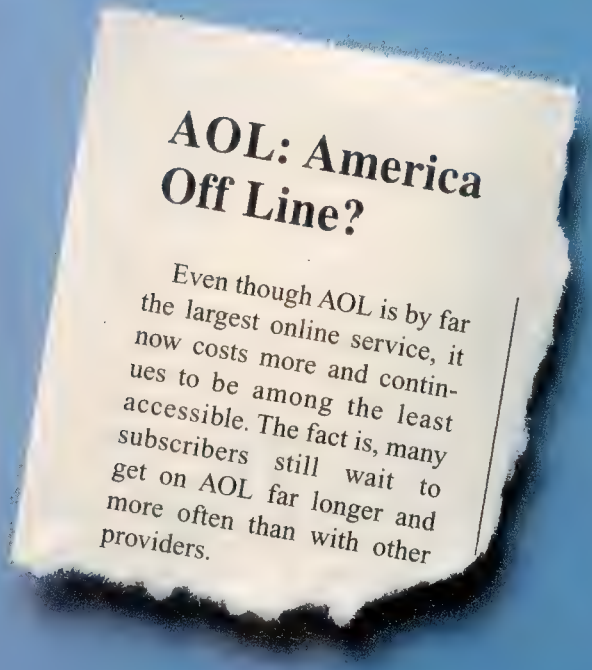
Surviving the WARHAMMER Blow

1. Ignore infantry at your peril. Always use artillery to soften up known infantry targets, suspicious trees, and buildings. Your tanks rarely die from small arms fire, but infantry can suppress your tanks and force them to retreat.

2. Because of the way morale works, you can multiply the damage you do by shooting multiple types of targets. For example, killing one tank and one bike is better than killing two tanks of the same kind. This forces morale checks on the tank platoon and the bike platoon, giving you a chance to rout more Orks.

3. When you have to move toward an objective, use bounding overwatch tactics. Keep half of your forces stationary and move the others only half of their movement. The following turn, move up the troops that stayed put during the previous turn. Repeat this process until you have reached your objective. This ensures that three-quarters of your potential shots are available for opportunity fire to greet intruding Orks.

These days, many AOL users are finding themselves S.O.L.



AOL: America Off Line?

Even though AOL is by far the largest online service, it now costs more and continues to be among the least accessible. The fact is, many subscribers still wait to get on AOL far longer and more often than with other providers.

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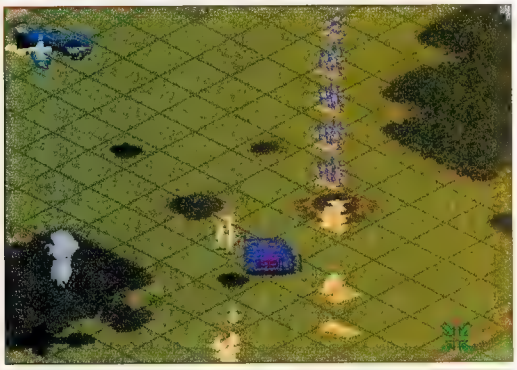
Shadowsword: You need Superheavies to hold ground, and this is the best of the bunch. It has the longest range of any tank-killing gun not mounted on a Titan: two shots each with the Volcano Cannon and Las-cannon. Place your Shadowsword on a hill with clear lanes of fire and nothing will move without your permission. The other superheavies, such as the Leviathan, are still good choices, but they don't offer the tank-killing ability that the Shadowsword does. Regardless of which Superheavies you choose, keep just two in your regiment. Any more are a handicap due to their slow speed and large size.

Titans: Titans are the kings of battle. Even the "small" Warhounds are formidable, and Warlords are virtually impossible to kill. As soon as you can afford it, get a platoon of Warhounds. They're nearly as cheap as the Superheavies, but they take more hits, and their Plasma Cannons are excellent for taking out enemy tanks.



ORK TURKEY SHOOT Sometimes Orks are too confident that their speed will protect them, which makes them inviting targets for your artillery.

Death From Above

Thunderhawks: As soon as you can afford it, buy a Thunderhawk. Put the Thunderhawk at elevation level 15 and station it about five squares behind your front lines. You will be able to see virtually all the Ork units. The only exceptions are any Orks immediately next to tall buildings.

Thunderhawks can take out any Ork vehicle with their rockets, but try to stay at maximum range or you may lose one to ground fire. Antiaircraft opportunity fire almost always happens on your return flight, so find isolated targets that you know you can kill, or fly into range of just one target. After you've dropped your load, hightail it back behind friendly troops.

Land Speeders: These are useful only as spotters. Their weapons have too short a range, and you will just get them killed trying to get a return on your investment.

Marauders: Though Marauders are fun, avoid them, as they're more fragile than Thunderhawks and aren't effective as spotters.

BROKEN TINKERTOYS Make the most of your opportunity fire. Most of these dead Orks didn't even see the units that took them out.

Finally, a fun trick to pull with a flying unit is to fly over to an abandoned objective and land. If your flier survives till the next turn, the objective is yours and you can fly off on other errands. If nothing else, the Orks will scurry over to take it back, perhaps exposing them to your opportunity fire.

4. When your regiments have grown to around 1,600 points, consider adding one platoon of Deathstrike missile launchers. Yes, they shoot only once, making them relatively expensive, but their Warp missiles *ignore* Void shields! One hit will severely wound a Gargant, and two hits will turn your enemy into molten slag. Make sure you put your Deathstrikes where they can see the whole battlefield, because, unlike normal artillery, they are direct-fire weapons.

5. Whirlwinds are best at killing large concentrations of infantry and bikers. At long range their missile pattern will spread to attack two squares at once.

6. Thud guns are good for close support of infantry, but their limited 28-square range and poor armor penetration make them a liability. Use them only if you're addicted to indirect fire.

7. Thunderhawks are the best troop transports, with Rhinos being a close second because of their high mobility and decent armor.

8. Don't leave troop transports in the open. Almost any Ork cannon can easily penetrate their thin armor.

9. While a Leviathan is better than a Chimera, it's still too slow for mobile fighting. Use the Leviathan's durability and weapons to your advantage by positioning it on a hill.

10. Bombards have a very good chance of killing anything the Orks have. If you lack Deathstrike missile launchers, Bombards do a nice job of using up a Gargant's Void shields.

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STRATEGY & TIPS

Uprising

General Strategies to Take Down the Imperium

by Robert Coffey

It's tough running a rebellion. You not only have to be a fighting machine, but you also have to be the brains of the operation. Although tough, bruising action dominates gameplay in UPRISING, there's a fair dose of strategy involved as well. Unique situations dictate that you devise plans on a planet-by-planet basis to conquer the Imperium's citadels. Here are some general tips and strategies to help keep you alive long enough to do just that.

TAKING ADVANTAGE Freshly dropped citadels can be spotted by the energy particles swirling around them. Citadels are very vulnerable at this stage.

Safe at Home

Without your own citadels and the power and troops they supply, you're going to be dead meat. Protecting your citadels is critical to success. Upgrades for your turrets and SAMs are among the very first things you should purchase. Early in the game, a pair of turrets and one SAM provide a sturdy defense; however, later in the campaign, when air attacks grow more devastating, you may want to add an extra SAM at the expense of the second turret. And even though you can do it, don't just jump into the citadel and start shooting. You're much more effective and valuable in your Wraith; besides, the citadel does fine by itself.

As you move through the planetary systems, you'll find that your first citadel will start to face earlier and more frequent onslaughts. When you start a mission, drop in your production facilities, then wait for the inevitable attack. When the enemy strikes, place your defenses to maximize your effectiveness against this initial siege—you can always sell the defensive machinery later. These early attacks can easily make or break a mission, since a prolonged fight in which you're forced to purchase several citadels can eat up critical resources early. If you've got the money, buy some extra AAVs and tanks before you land on a planet. Deploy these guys to quickly thwart the early attack.

PURCHASING POWER Buying defense upgrades should be one of your first priorities.

Turrets and SAMs are great, but you'll need some help to keep your citadel safe enough to let you explore the planet and fulfill your mission objectives. Leaving a few units at a base for protection is a good idea. Tanks are pretty handy, though they are most effective against ground forces. If the Imperium is throwing bombers at you, leave a few AAVs to hold down the fort. Use mines to clog enemy attack routes with some explosive death. Deeper into the game, the size of enemy forces grows, so you'll want to mine close to your citadels as well. Even these defenses will wilt when they are faced with a full-scale invasion, but they'll buy you enough time to return home with your Wraith for some heavy-duty clobbering.

Restless Natives

One of your first priorities in any mission should be wiping out native forces. Scour the area around your initial citadel for any native production facilities. These buildings have yellow markings as opposed to the Imperium's red—leave the red ones alone until you absolutely have to confront them. Native buildings are vulnerable to Wraith attacks and go down more easily than citadel-protected Imperium structures. Taking out natives will quell many of the pesky attacks that normally plague your initial citadel.

In addition to securing the area near your bases, you'll want to wipe

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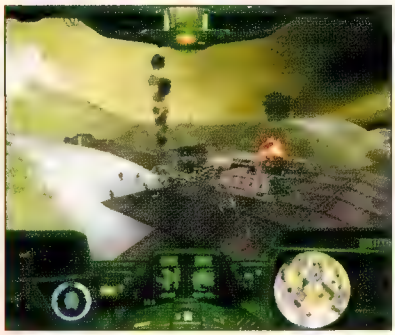

GOING NATIVE Make native facilities early targets on each planet. Getting the natives out of the way prevents them from joining forces with the Imperium.

out native support-forces around any Imperium citadels before your real assault. Native forces don't regenerate, so it's good to get them out of the way early. Try not to position yourself between the Imperium and the natives you're attacking; a stray laser could draw the attention of the Imperium's combined forces. Likewise, use mole torpedoes or a combination of attention-drawing tanks and withering Wraith fire to take out the turrets protecting Imperium perimeters. If you're feeling lucky, and the terrain is cooperative, you can take out a heavy turret with skillful circle-strafing (a key tactic in all combat).

Taking On the Man

With native forces and perimeter defenses taken care of, it's time to go after those Imperium citadels. You should focus your initial attack on the citadel itself, since your enemies will quickly replace any production facilities you destroy. Besides, once the citadel is down, the other buildings are that much easier to demolish. Ignore the temptation to use bombers on the citadel; they're easily shot down, even if you've taken out the SAMs. Instead, draw citadel fire with your Wraith and send in infantry. Save the bombers to quickly eliminate production buildings after the citadel goes down. If the Imperium drops a new citadel after you've destroyed the first one, forget everything else and blast away at it. New citadels are incredibly vulnerable as long as you see that energy ribbon swirling around them. If you ignore the citadel and let it power up fully, you'll basically have to start your attack all over again.

Air cover is a must in any assault, and using a few of your tanks to tie up the enemy is a good move as well. Don't bother shooting enemy infantry unless you must, and especially don't waste limited resources such as missiles on them. Instead, just run them over. With practice, you can learn to steer your massive Wraith over those squishy little infantrymen while blasting guided missiles at Imperium AAVs.

Once you can drop your own citadel, do it. If you wait to mop up residual forces, odds are the Imperium will drop its own citadel. Once the citadel is called you can place turrets and SAMs. Plunk them down right in the heat of the action (you can reposition them later) and call in reinforcements to eliminate any Imperium stragglers. When the action dies down, repair your Wraith and scout previously inaccessible terrain for secreted native forces before moving on to the next massacre.

Good luck and long live the Rebellion!

DEFENSIVE MANEUVERS Wait for the early enemy attacks before placing your turrets and SAMs where they can be most effective. Throw in some air support for a well-defended base.

Five Tips to Keep You Alive

1. Don't waste valuable space with extra power plants. Keep one going at a time and monitor it. When the power is depleted, sell it and build a unit producer. Build a new plant at another base.

2. Always save your game *before* purchasing upgrades and additional support units. This prevents you from getting locked into a strategy that might not suit the planet you're about to attack.

3. Don't bother with KSATs (attack satellites). They're costly, they require two power buildings at the expense of more valuable troop facilities, and they're a waste against anything other than a citadel. The Imperium can use them since they can muster the necessary heavy troop support. If you can afford that kind of extra troop support, you don't need the KSATs.

4. In later missions, target power plants after destroying a citadel. This will keep the Imperium from launching a crippling KSAT strike against the fledgling citadel you'll set up over its remains.

5. Upgrade AAVs and infantry early, then tanks, then bombers. You'll want some guided missiles around the fourth or fifth mission. You'll also want some building-destroying weapons as soon as you can afford them; save up for the devastating anti-matter disk.

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STRATEGY & TIPS

G-Police

Pay Attention to This Briefing or Suffer the Consequences

by Scott A. May

Any way you look at it, Psygnosis' G-POLICE sets new standards for sci-fi shooters. From the 3D-enhanced graphics to the awesome firepower of your attack copter, G-POLICE is filled with explosive action and stunning eye candy. Unfortunately, it can also get rather difficult, as you pound your way through 35 increasingly arduous levels. The following tips (and cheat codes) will help guide you through a handful of key missions

Mission 9: Runaway Train!

Here is an excellent example of the game's broad scope. For this mission you must track a runaway land train, disarm its gun turrets, remove its explosive cargo, and stop the loco before it plows into a dome wall. To succeed, you'll need perfect timing, weapons finesse, and precise piloting skills.

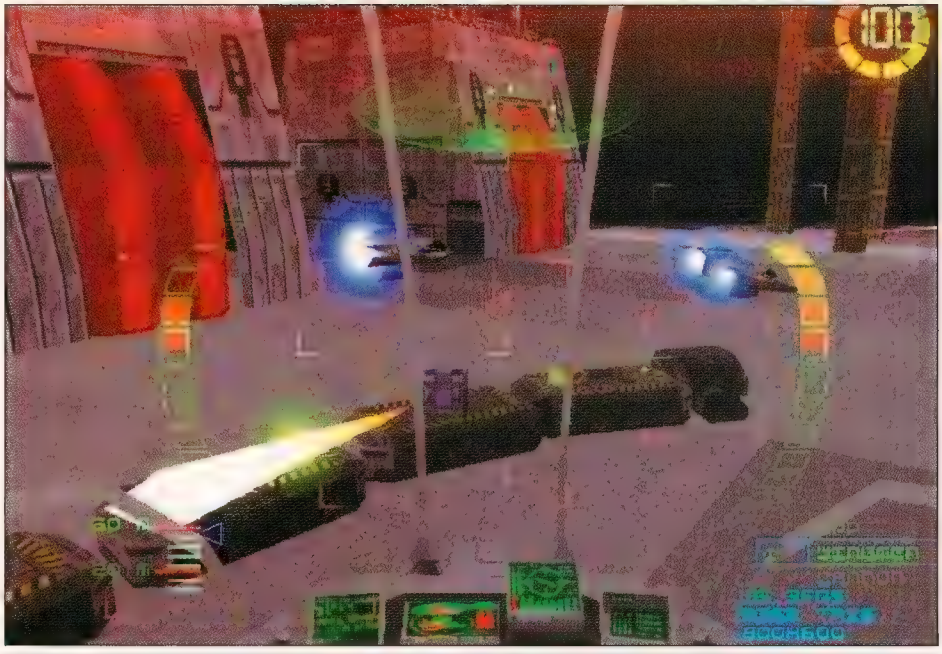
First, fly to your waypoint and knock out all air and ground opposition. Hovering at ground level, wait for the train to appear from the nearby building. With infrared missiles locked on, take out

Mission 5: Save a Life, Lose a Friend

In the mission prior to this, your job was to clear the spaceport dome of gang fighters and suspicious ground vehicles before Argenta's shuttle arrived. If you were successful, then Argenta exited the shuttle and entered the presidential limousine. However, she's not out of harm's way yet.

Your first task in Mission 5 is to eliminate the initial wave of fighters that appear near the limousine. Wait for instructions, then move to ground level and proceed to the first roadblock, which is comprised of gun turrets and parked cars. Take out the gun turrets with your Matra rockets, then start blasting the parked cars with missiles in order to clear a path for the approaching limo. Meanwhile, instruct your wingman, Tachikawa, to guard the limo against airborne fighters.

Unfortunately, Tachikawa will be lost in the melee. Alas, this tragedy is unavoidable, so keep a stiff upper lip and destroy the remaining fighters. Keep a close eye on the limo and follow it through the tunnel to the next dome. If you wander too far, the limo driver will try to kidnap Argenta. Be alert: Two fighters will appear near the tunnel entrance. Once you have dispatched them, zoom ahead to disable the next roadblock. Again, concentrate your rocket fire on the gun turrets, then clear the path of parked cars. As the limo approaches Krakov headquarters, prepare for one last fighter assault. Once the limo reaches the building, the mission ends.



MYSTERY TRAIN Timing, piloting skills, and dead aim are critical in Mission 9, as you race to disarm and destroy a runaway land train.

X MARKS THE SPOT Mission 30 culminates with the destruction of Nanosoft HQ, as you torch this easily recognized target with air fuel bombs.

the gun turrets mounted on the top of every second car. Here's where most pilots muck up: Blast too wildly at the turrets and you'll destroy the train, ending the mission in failure. So be accurate and tight with those bad boys.

Now comes the tricky part. You have to follow the train from above, matching its speed while you scan the cars with the flashing lights to locate the bombs (there are three of them). Grab a bomb, hightail it to the next waypoint, dispose of the bomb, zoom back to the train, and repeat this procedure for the next bomb. Between these minisorties, fighters will try to engage you—ignore them, because time is running out.

If you've been stealthy, you should return just in time to remove the final bomb. Unleash your remaining rockets and missiles on the train, focusing on the engine, to destroy it before it reaches the dome. Then sit back and dry your palms, because it ain't over yet..

Mission 30: Wreaking Havoc.

One of the more intense and explosive missions in the game, this one requires that you destroy the Nanosoft headquarters. But

▸▸▸Continued on pg 228

Level Codes

Having trouble fulfilling those primary objectives to advance to the next level in G-Police? No sweat. Simply type in one of the following level codes to jump immediately to that stage of the game. Note: Level codes are a one-time cheat only. Once a level code has been used, you will no longer be able to advance normally to the next level, regardless of how well you do. Guess you can use them just to take a look around.

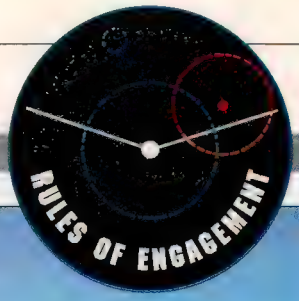
To jump to a specific level, enter one of the following codes from the game's main menu screen. Codes should be typed in lowercase letters. Confirmation of your command will appear on the screen. You can then start a new game and begin at the selected level.

Level	Code
1	madgav
2	delman
3	sonagav
4	acedud
5	jojogun
6	weeski
7	saeggy
8	mazman
9	dazman
10	delucs
11	adnoooo
12	klubchs
13	andymac
14	yerman
15	ollieb
16	theyik
17	tonymash
18	andycrow
19	bionic
20	tulaby
21	iainthod
22	jourltr
23	clairec
24	stevebut
25	angust
26	euanlec
27	edfire
28	stukenk
29	thonboy
30	jimmac
31	pugger
32	reesco
33	cakeboy
34	niknak
35	saglord

Mission 14: Triple Trouble

This mission tests your mettle on three levels, as your team attempts to destroy a Krakov military complex. First, protect your ground forces by flying ahead and eliminating all fighter threads with cannon fire and Firestreak missiles. You must clear the airspace or the ground team won't advance.

Next, accompany the ground team into the next dome. Take out the fighters that appear and then afterburn to the tunnel exit. Employ Starburst and Hypervelocity missiles to blast the gunship before your troops arrive. Continue to the next dome, but disregard the Krakov transport vehicles for now—they're just a ruse to disrupt your timing. Instead, zoom to the first waypoint to escort the awaiting bomber group. Soon, your ground troops will fall under attack again. Quickly drop to ground level, engage the fighters, and target the heavily defended Krakov compound. Drop all five 1000kg bombs and watch the fireworks!



STRATEGY & TIPS

JSF

The Sky Is Falling: A Guide to Successful Bombing

by Tom "KC" Basham

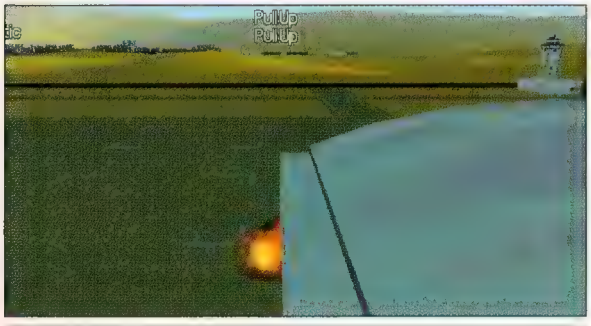
NO WORRIES Practice dropping bombs in friendly territory so you won't have to worry about enemy planes sneaking up behind you.

About 80 years ago, someone got the idea to drop items from early biplanes in the hopes that the object would actually inflict some damage on enemy forces when it landed. I've often imagined the first "bomber" pilot flying along in his biplane and pitching an empty bottle out of the plane over enemy territory. Watching it fall to the ground, he sees the "bomb" punch a hole in some farmer's barn, smash some pedestrian on the head, or shatter dramatically on some road. The proverbial light bulb illuminates: Man has invented a new form of warfare

Now, I don't know if such insight really resulted from something as mundane as pitching trash from a moving vehicle (though stranger things have happened). Regardless of the source of the inspiration, dropping bombs from airborne vehicles ultimately revolutionized the face of war. Despite the proliferation of high-tech smart weapons, unguided "iron bombs" still comprise a major part of any air force's offensive punch. Combat pilots, even those flying futuristic aircraft such as the Joint Strike Fighter, must be well versed in the art of dropping unguided bombs. Having a sudden avionics failure, happening upon an unexpected target, or sustaining battle damage may force the pilot to improvise. There are few improvisations more effective than dropping a 1,000-pound bomb on an enemy's head!

It's All in the Approach

To become an effective iron bomber you need to understand a little about the physics of bomb trajectories. Let's first examine the bomb itself. While falling, the bomb moves in two directions at once. First, thanks to gravity, the bomb moves down. Obviously, the higher the bomb is released, the longer it takes to hit the ground. Second, the bomb moves forward, with its velocity based on the speed of the launching aircraft. The faster the aircraft was moving at the time of release, the farther the bomb will move forward, before hitting the ground. We have, therefore, just defined the main parameters for determining iron bomb range: the speed and altitude of the launching aircraft.



DIRECT HIT Don't get so absorbed in admiring your handiwork that you follow your bombs straight into the target.

In fact, we've just established a very key point: Nearly every factor that influences where a bomb lands is based on what the aircraft (that is, the pilot) was doing when the bomb was released. The bomb inherits the aircraft's momentum at the time of the release. A climbing aircraft can "toss" a bomb, while a turning aircraft will "sling" the bomb to the side. This is your flight "attitude." We sim jocks often say things like "The bomb missed its target," somehow implying the bomb, not the pilot, was at fault. We might be able to blame a miss on a guided weapon (like an air-to-air missile), but when it comes to iron bombs we should be admitting, "I failed to properly aim the bomb."

Iron bombing begins by aiming the aircraft precisely at the target, then releasing the weapon. Any changes in flight attitude or airspeed between aiming the aircraft and releasing the weapon will usually cause the weapon to miss. If you're having trouble hitting targets with iron bombs, it's time to reexamine your delivery technique.

A Walk in the Park

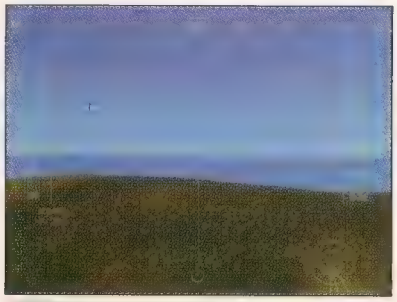
Let's take some specific examples from JSF. Things become exponentially more difficult when people start shooting back. Not surprisingly, the easiest approach toward the target usually makes you an easy target for enemy air defenses. Since we're starting with the basics and want to fly an easy approach, we consequently need to attack a

lightly defended target. Since many sims lack adequate training features, sometimes the easiest way to train for bombing is simply to attack your own airfield. It's close, it's convenient, and it won't shoot back.

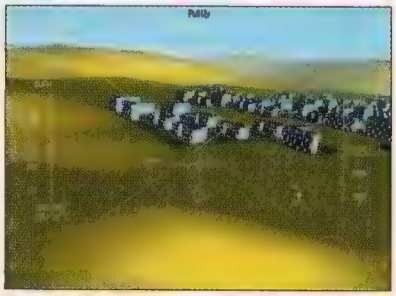
As with most modern combat jets, JSF features a Continuously Calculated Impact Point (CCIP) mode on the Heads-Up Display (HUD). The idea behind CCIP is simple: It shows where bombs released right now will land. Simply line up the plane with the target, keep it steady, wait for the CCIP marker (also known as the "death dot") to drag across the target, and release the weapon. The CCIP marker dynamically adjusts based on your flight attitude. We determined earlier that altitude, airspeed, and flight attitude affect the bomb's impact point. With the CCIP marker on the HUD, we can see exactly *how* these attributes influence targeting.

For practice, any simple mission will do. I chose the first mission of the Afghanistan campaign simply to minimize any interference by enemy fighters. Load your aircraft with 1,000 pounds of GBU-32 bombs and take off. Once airborne, press the Backspace key to select the GBU-32. Climb to 3,000 feet. The CCIP indicator appears as a circle (indicating the bomb impact point) connected to the center of the HUD by a line. Leave the throttle in afterburner and let the aircraft continue to accelerate. Notice how the impact marker moves up the screen toward the center of the HUD as the aircraft accelerates. This indicates that, since the aircraft is moving faster, the bomb will be thrown farther ahead of the current position. Now, chop the throttle and slow the aircraft. The CCIP marker moves down the screen, indicating that the slower-moving bomb will not travel as far forward before impacting the ground. When the CCIP circle begins to disappear off the screen, take note of your airspeed. It'll probably be somewhere around 330 knots.

Climb to 15,000 feet and repeat the experiment. Notice now that the CCIP marker disappears below the HUD at a much faster speed, somewhere around 530 knots.



DEATH DOT The CCIP display shows where the bomb will hit the ground.



PULL UP Diving causes the CCIP impact marker to move up the HUD. The big X warns you when it's time to pull up.

Recalling those trigonometry courses from high school, you'll remember that at a higher altitude the terrain viewed through the HUD is considerably farther away. Therefore, the bombs must travel at a higher speed in order to cover the greater distance to that point before impacting the ground. At very high altitude, you may not be able to fly fast enough for the CCIP marker to appear on the HUD; what do you do then? Push the aircraft into a dive. As you lower the nose, the CCIP marker will reappear.

Armed with this basic information, you're ready to start dropping bombs. You now know how to manipulate the CCIP marker with your airspeed and altitude. From this point it's all a matter of practice, practice, and more practice. Then, when you think you're ready for combat, go back and practice some more. Dropping iron bombs may not seem as glorious as air-to-air duels against enemy pilots, but successful bombing attacks require an incredible amount of skill and precision flying. In the age of "multirole" and "strike" fighters, combat pilots absolutely must develop their bombing skills.

A Kill's A Kill

Pilots have a saying: *A kill's a kill.* In other words, it doesn't matter what you did or how you did it, if you came home and the other guy didn't, you won. One of the strangest air-to-air kills of all time came during the 1991 Gulf War. On February 14, 1991 an F-15E belonging to the 335th TFS/4th TFW spotted a hovering Iraqi helicopter. The crew released a 2,000-pound laser-guided bomb, which hit and destroyed the helicopter, scoring the 40th air-to-air kill for Coalition forces.

STRATEGY & TIPS

Red Baron II

A Survival Guide for the Would-be Ace

by Robin G. Kim

Every WWI flight-sim fan dreams of surpassing the infamous Manfred von Richthofen's final score of 80 confirmed victories. But however difficult it may be to rack up such a string of kills, there's a more basic hurdle to overcome in RED BARON II's long and arduous campaigns that can be just as challenging: staying alive until the armistice. To have any hope of surviving to collect a virtual pension, you must manage your risk factors. There are many ways to die in the sim, and luck inevitably abandons the reckless.

Death From Within

The most ignominious doom is the one that is self-inflicted (if you are going to die, at least try to look good doing it). Examples include inattentiveness during low level dogfights and routine landing mishaps. You can usually prevent the former by toggling frequently between the padlock and fixed forward views whenever you're fighting near the ground. However, be wary of bandits that try to evade you by entering seemingly unrecoverable dives—the AI makes mistakes too, which should bring to mind the lesson your mother taught you about friends who jump off cliffs.

ROCKET RANGE Rockets trajectories are hard to judge, but good accuracy can be achieved by figuring out the exact range at which the rockets' path intercepts the view through your gunsight.

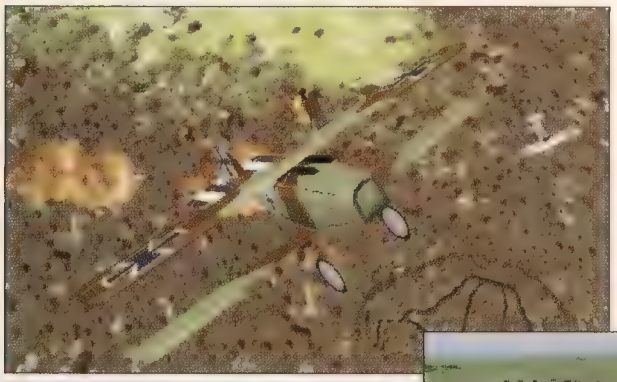
Landing these tail-draggers is tricky even under ideal conditions. The most common error is touching down with too much speed and too high a sink rate. To avoid this pitfall, use a shallow approach at 125–150 percent of stall speed. (If your plane lacks an airspeed indicator, the tachometer is a workable substitute.) Idle the engine within a few feet of the ground and smoothly raise the nose to try to maintain altitude, taking extreme care not to pull up so fast that you start to climb. As airspeed bleeds off, your plane will fall gently to the ground in a three-point landing with the nose pointed above the horizon. The important thing here is to settle down lightly. Small bounces are common, but present no problems as long as you maintain a constant pitch angle. Higher bounces, on the other hand—usually caused by a hard touchdown or by pulling the nose too high after a mild rebound—can be disastrous.

Death From Below

Once you're sure you won't do yourself in, it's time to turn your attention to external threats. Among the most dangerous is antiaircraft fire. Exploding shells from large-caliber guns are nearly inevitable, but such fire is so inaccurate that it can practically be ignored. Ground fire from enemy machine-gunners is by far the greater hazard.

Keep a sharp lookout for tracers coming from below when flying within 5,000 feet of the ground anywhere near or behind enemy lines. If you start taking fire, use evasive maneuvering until you are safely out of range. The closer the source, the more violent your gyrations must be to throw off AAA aim. When the shots are coming from below, use continuously alternating S-turns (and pray). Vertical undulations are preferable if you can see the source of the tracers; simply pitching up or down sharply when the gun opens up will cause an entire burst to miss.

Machine-gun fire is hardest to dodge at medium altitudes. Thus, you should decide before you get near any enemy position whether you will take the time to climb above the machine guns' ceiling first, or keep low and evade the bullets as they come. Either can work, though the low road requires constant vigilance.



HOT UNDER THE COLLAR If oil pressure starts to drop, kill the engine immediately to prevent your aircraft from turning into a flying torch.

Death From Above

High above the machine-guns and barbed wire, enemy fighters present the greatest menace. Heeding these tips can markedly increase your survival chances. First, always attack from above if possible. Even after the battle is joined, try to stay above the bandits and swoop down only for brief firing passes before climbing back up to your perch. Second, do not get fixated on a single target for too long, or you can almost guarantee another will appear parked on your six; cycle constantly between all nearby enemies using the padlock view. If a bandit does manage to saddle up behind you, enter a hard diving turn—pulling up into a climb is like asking to be perforated.

Try to aim for a target's wings whenever possible. By degrading its maneuverability in this way, you not only reduce its threat potential, you make it more vulnerable to further attacks. And if you're lucky, the damage may eventually cause it to crash on its own.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE When landing in the proper nose-high attitude, judging your height above ground is often easier if you shift your view to one side.

As long as you respect the threat of their deadeye gunners, two-seaters are easy marks compared to fighters. Strive to attack the lowest of a group first, from a position below it or on the outside of its turn so it cannot fire on you. If you get far enough out of position for the gunner to take shots at you, nosing down or easing off your turn will have the double benefit of evading the tracers and quickly taking you back into his blind spot.

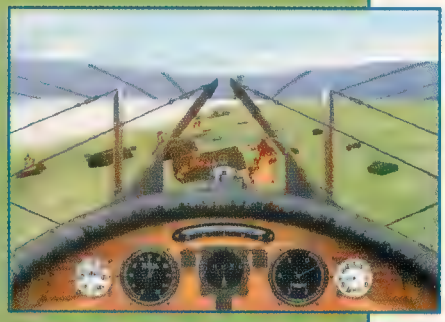
SLIP-SLIDING AWAY Heavy use of sideslipping (pushing the rudder one way and banking the other) can dump airspeed very quickly when coming in hot for landing.

Heavy bombers like the Gotha G.IV and Handley-Page 0/400 have much wider gun coverage, which makes them tough to bring down. The only safe approach is to fire from beyond the range of their withering defensive fire. Obviously, this requires good marksmanship or a lot of ammo, but it beats returning to the aerodrome in a plane riddled with bullet holes—or not returning at all.

Returning home safely each day, keeping the number of landings equal to the number of takeoffs: These are the foundations for success in the sim. The war-torn skies of RED BARON II offer such a target-rich environment that your roster of victories will almost surely mount steadily—but only as long as you survive. Be careful up there!

Balloon Busting

Despite their inherent dangers, balloon attack missions should be among the most straightforward. You just have to fly to the target area, dive down and blow up the balloon, then run like hell from the vicious return fire and defending fighters, right? In RED BARON II, it's not that simple.



Spotting the balloon can be the hardest part. They're easy to see against a sky background, which is an argument for approaching at or below its altitude (around 3,500 feet). However, this puts you in range of the gasbag's formidable air-defense umbrella for much longer than does a diving attack. Diving also gives you a valuable speed boost on egress if any bandits have latched onto your tail.

If you start your dive but can't find the target, try padlocking onto the location below it using the "L" key (padlock nearest landmark). Point directly at it, then trace your line of sight directly upward. Somewhere on that imaginary line lies the balloon.

Although it's tempting to run for home as soon as you have popped the balloon, doing so will usually result in heavy casualties among your wingmen, who seem to enjoy attacking the ground targets below. If you wish to save them from their folly (though at great personal risk), knock out all nearby machine-gun emplacements as quickly as possible. This is easy if the guns are firing at your wingmen, but extraordinarily perilous when the bull's-eye is on you. Try to time your attacks to come between bursts in the latter case.

Suppressing machine-guns may be nasty work, but consider the alternative: Having to explain to an angry CO why you always return from balloon busting missions by yourself.

STRATEGY & TIPS

Quake II

Tips and Maps Revealed for Multiplay and DeathMatch Packs

by V. Long and Elliott Chin

DeathMatch has always been the heart of QUAKE and QUAKE II. With id's recent point release, this is even more evident. The point release (available from id's Web site at **www.idsoftware.com**) consists of co-op play and eight incredible levels brimming with ledge-on-ledge sniping areas, open gunfight arenas, and clever nooks and crannies. The tips in this second part of our QUAKE II strategy guide should help you get a leg up on the competition in DeathMatch. This month, we're providing tips on weapons, the new QUAKE II bots, alternate forms of multiplay, and—best of all—maps for two of the DeathMatch Pack levels. Maps of The Edge and The Frag Pipe are included in these pages; the other six new maps can be found on our Web site (**www.computergaming.com**) and on next month's CG-ROM.

Choose Your Weapon

As in DOOM and QUAKE, the biggest gun is not always the best. Inflict maximum mayhem by choosing your weapon wisely *before* a battle—the delay in swapping guns may mean your last gasp.

Blaster: As we all know, it sucks.

Shotguns: The shotguns deliver their lethal load of buckshot instantaneously. The super shotgun—John Carmack's weapon of choice—sends twice the wallop, and is quite deadly point-blank. Also, shotguns are good Quad weapons because there is no danger of blowing yourself up in a close firefight.

Machine Gun: The machine gun punctures targets immediately as well. The machine gun's recoil will spoil the player's aim in solo play, but not in DeathMatch.

Chain Gun: Like a real-life GE M134 "Vulcan" mini-gun, the chain gun requires time to spool the barrels to speed. The chain gun—id artist Kevin Cloud's favorite toy—is fearsome in close quarters where the target has little opportunity to evade, but it consumes voracious amounts of ammo. When you know where your target is, start shooting *before* you see him, so that by the time you make contact, your gun is at full speed.

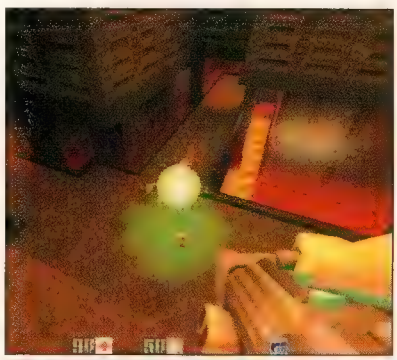
Grenades: Whether tossed by hand or with a launcher, grenades are handy for discouraging pursuit or checking around corners.

Rocket Launcher: The rocket launcher remains an explosive favorite for many players, including id game designers Tim Willits, American McGee, and Paul Jacqueys. The key is to chip away at your opponents' health with blast damage: Shoot at their feet. Note that rockets are actually easy to dodge due to their relatively slow speed and visible trail.

Hyper Blaster: Many think of the hyper blaster as the reincarnation of DOOM's plasma rifle or QUAKE's super nail-gun. It shoots blasterlike bolts, but at a much higher cyclic rate. Like the chain gun, the hyper blaster needs time to spool up and spool down. Regardless, its firepower means hell at close- to mid-range.

Rail Gun: QUAKE II's rail gun hurls a slug, à la *Eraser*, at a tremendous velocity, ripping through enemies with ease. Despite its lethality, the long reload time makes the rail gun challenging to use in a melee, unless you have steely nerves and inhuman aim. If you must use it at short range, remember to wait! Barring point-blank shots from the super shotgun, you can withstand some fire and take the time to aim. Still, most mortals find the rail gun best for long range sniping. Be sure to check out the GOLDENEYE sidebar for a quick "cheat" for better rail gun use.

BFG: The crown jewel of the DOOM arsenal has returned.

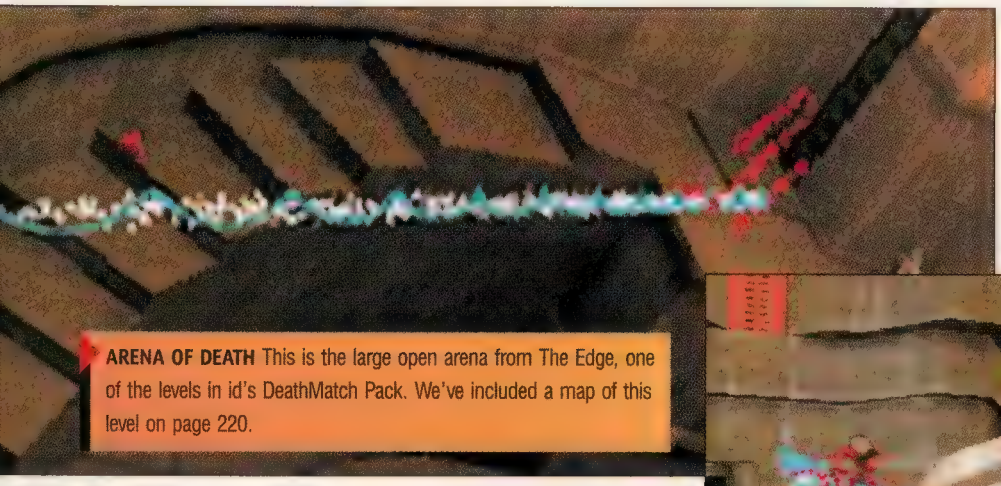


GREAT BALL OF FIRE The BFG's long firing rate necessitates a pre-emptive trigger finger.

The GoldenEye Macro

id programmer Brian Hook raves about this handy macro (from Casey Muratori and Matt Cornell), especially when slinging rail-gun slugs into squirrelly targets. It's most helpful for those who don't already have mouselook and crosshairs toggled on. To configure your right mouse button for the GOLDENEYE macro type the following into the console (hit [Enter] after each line):

```
Bind mouse2 +bond
alias +bond "fov 45; +mlook; crosshair 1"
alias -bond "fov 90; -mlook; crosshair 0"
```



ARENA OF DEATH This is the large open arena from The Edge, one of the levels in id's DeathMatch Pack. We've included a map of this level on page 220.

Special thanks to Tim Willits at id Software for providing maps, schematics, screenshots, and tons of help.

Pull the trigger, and after a moment of charging up, a massive ball of green death is unleashed with violent recoil. When you have a good idea there's someone lurking very nearby, pull the trigger *before* stepping around the corner. If your shot is properly timed, you'll gain line-of-sight the instant the BFG blasts the sucker into oblivion. The BFG's shafts of green light are also useful for tracking adversaries hidden from your view.

Tactics

Last month, we offered some tactics for ruling at DeathMatch. Here is something we left out: the art of ladder kills. Once you get comfortable navigating ladders, try "hanging" partway up or down a ladder. Many players won't expect to find you there, and that moment of surprise will give you the drop on them.

You can also use even the narrowest of ledges and lips to help you "stick" to walls. Again, this allows you to gain vantage points where others won't expect to find you. Some of our favorite spots include door frames and the far side of openings behind ladders.

When chasing people on ladders, look up (or down, as the case may be) and run. This allows you to shoot at your target while climbing. If you are climbing a ladder and know someone is waiting for you, you can use this tactic to shoot at the ladder top so he can't snipe at you from above.

Playing With Yourself

Although the best practice partners are other human players, it's always nice to get in a few non-human frags as well. Spice up your DeathMatches with more bodies—simply spawn as many bots as you can stand. Bots are also good for practice when you can't round up any live opponents.

The two fragleaders are the Eraser Bot from impact (found at **impact.frag.com**) and the CR Bot (found at **www.planetquake. com/crbot**).

You can download and learn more about these intelligent punching bags from the QUAKE II Bot Epidemic site at **www.quake2.com /epidemic**.

BULLSEYE Using the rail gun requires superior aim and patience. Don't fire too quickly; one shot is probably all you're going to get.

Life Beyond DeathMatch

Finally, we'll leave you with one of our favorite forms of multiplayer QUAKE mayhem: Rocket Arena. When it comes to a test of pure DeathMatch skill, few mods rival the effectiveness of Rocket Arena II. It's elegantly simple: You and a foe square off in an arena-type map...only one of you will survive. Find out more at **www.planetquake.com/servers/arena**.

Remember that in addition to the following maps of The Edge and The Frag Pipe, we also have maps for the six other DeathMatch levels in id's point release on our Web site (**www.computergaming.com**) and on next month's CG-ROM. Also tune in to *GameSpot* for more strategies from the editors of both *CGW* and *GameSpot*—including some preferred control configs and how to set up dedicated servers. That's it for this month. While these tips should help you out, remember that nothing can substitute for practice.

Instant Rocket-Jumping

Let's face it: Rocket-jumping takes a huge investment of time and concentrated effort to learn to do properly during DeathMatch. Although you're ultimately better off learning to rocket-jump "manually," you can give yourself an instant boost with this macro, which is slightly modified from the one Jakfrost has in his collection at **www.planetquake.com/scripts. html/quake2/**.

To configure your right mouse button for rocket-jumping, type the following at the console (hit [Enter] after each group of commands):

```
bind mouse2 +rj
alias +rj "rj1; rj2"
alias rj1 "set rj_cl_pitchspeed $cl_pitchspeed; set cl_pitchspeed 100000;
    wait; +lookdown; wait; -lookdown;
    set cl_pitchspeed $rj_cl_pitchspeed"
alias rj2 "set rj_hand $hand; hand 2;
    +moveup; wait; +attack"
alias -rj "-attack; -moveup; set hand
    $rj_hand; centerview"
```

Note that you'll need to switch to the rocket launcher before using this macro.

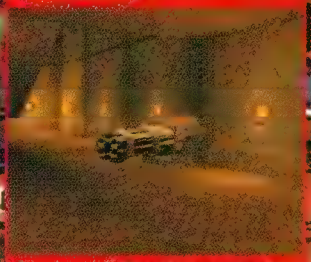
The Edge

This is a map of The Edge, from id's DeathMatch Pack. It's color-coded, with pointers to all the weapons, power-ups, and armor. Excluded are health and ammo. You can find that on your own. For the other six maps, check out www.computergaming.com.

Power-Ups

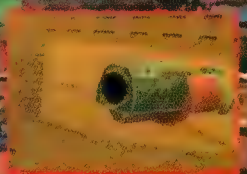
MEGA HEALTH [illegible]

Weapons



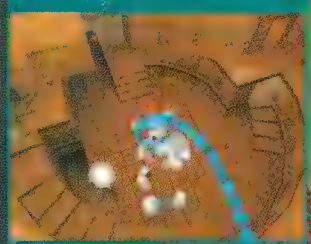
CHAIN GUN The chain gun and three packs of ammo are hidden [illegible]

MACHINE GUN The machine gun is hidden in this darkened [illegible]



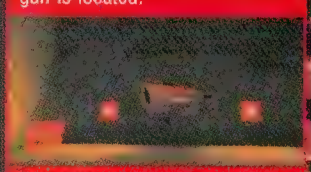
GRENADE LAUNCHER Its perch looks onto the spiraling area below.

Secret

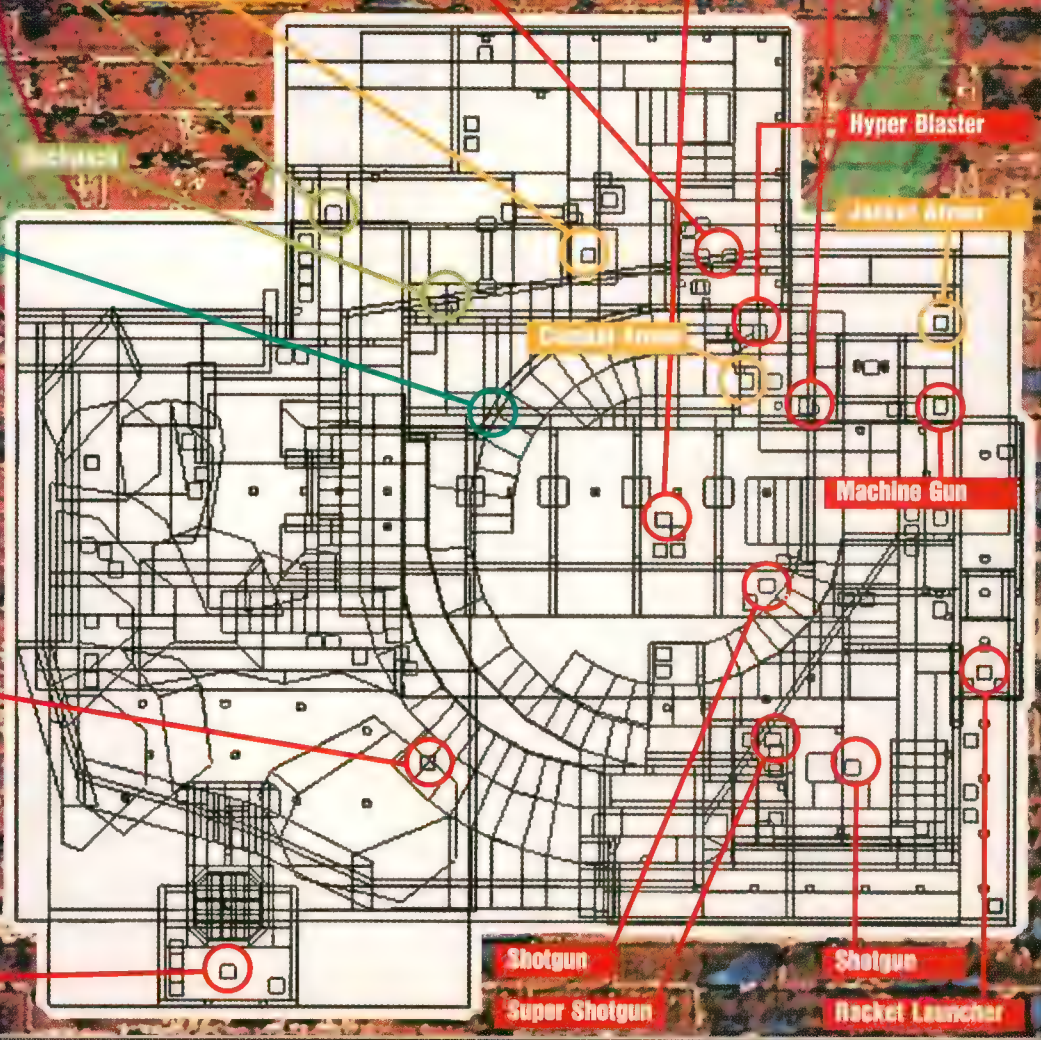


SNIPER HEAVEN [illegible]

ROCKET LAUNCHER This perch is the resting place of one of the level's two rocket launchers. Below and to the left is the underwater cave where the rail gun is located.



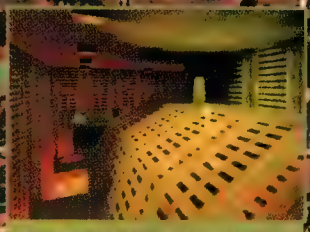
RAIL GUN This secret room, accessible only through the lava inside the rail gun, some [illegible]



Frag Pipe

The Frag Pipe is named after the one prominent trap in the level; the pipe that can be closed and flooded with lava. It's one of id's favorites. As with the map of The Edge, we've coded the armor, power-ups, and weapons, but left out health, ammo, and armor shards.

SUPER SHOTGUN Avoid the rail to get the Super Shotgun, and a perfect sniping spot for taking on a Quad ho who is coming out of the Quad area.

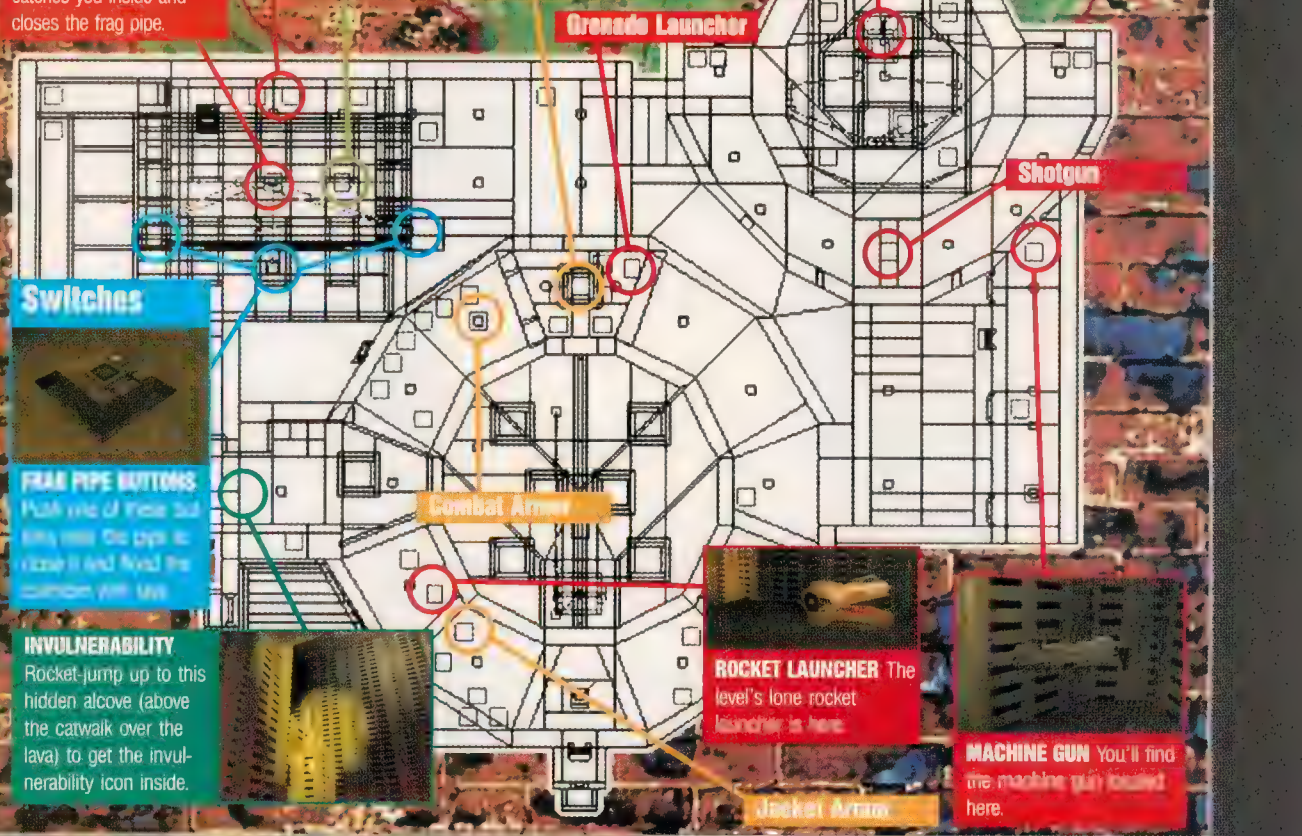


MEGA HEALTH Mega Health is easy to reach; it's to the right of the frag pipe, accessible via a ladder.

RAIL GUN To get to this rail gun, either ride the floating tiles over the slime to the elevator, or rocket jump across the gap.

HYPER BLASTER Inside the pipe lies the hyper blaster—and fiery death if someone catches you inside and closes the frag pipe.

QUAD DAMAGE Quad Damage is in the pipe. Once you've grabbed it, you'll want to head out of the pipe and into the Quad area.



FRAG PIPE BUTTONS Push one of these buttons. The pipe is closed and flooded with lava.

INVULNERABILITY Rocket-jump up to this hidden alcove (above the catwalk over the lava) to get the invulnerability icon inside.

ROCKET LAUNCHER The level's lone rocket launcher is here.

MACHINE GUN You'll find the machine gun located here.

STRATEGY & TIPS

Battlespire

The Clawed One Escorts You Through Bethesda's Brutally Tough Action/RPG

By Scorpia

Getting through BATTLESPIRE is no easy task. While the game may resemble DAGGERFALL in certain aspects, it is actually designed in a very different way, from a very different perspective. It is *not* your standard RPG, and if you go in thinking that it is, the game will be much harder to finish. The goal is simply to get through the levels and take out the Dragon at the end. What you do on each level has no relation to the build points you receive as you advance. Whether you just avoid encounters or kill everyone, the points are already fixed, and nothing you do will change them.

Character Issue

Correct character creation is critical to success here, and you are better off making your own character from scratch than choosing one of the "ready-made" types.

Essentially, you have three choices: Fighter, Mage, or a combination of the two. Thief classes will fare poorly: there are no opportunities for lockpicking or stealing, and stealth is only marginally useful for sneaking around, even at high skill-levels.

My own experience suggests that a character with two good weapon skills and a small selection of spells is the best way to go. It's difficult to play this game as a straight fighter type. I tried that first, and gave up on it by the second level of the spire.

I didn't try the mage character approach, but given what the game is like, even a mage will need at least one decent weapon skill for times when mana is low, or when monsters are highly resistant to magic.

Skills, Advantages, and Disadvantages

You really need only two weapon skills: one good hand-weapon (sword, ax, etc.) and one missile weapon. Bows are much more useful here than they have been in previous games.

Aside from weapon/spell skills, the skills most used in the game are going to be dodging, jumping, swimming, and critical strike. Anyone using weapons as the main attack form should have critical strike as a primary skill.

Don't neglect swimming. There are a couple of levels where you have to spend some time underwater, and being able to stay below the surface is important.

READY FOR BATTLE The character class creation system is a bit awkward, requiring you to fill in all the skill slots.

Jumping is done throughout the game. Having a high jumping-skill is actually a bad thing. It is very hard to control short jumps, and it may be impossible to make long ones if the ceiling is low. If you go too high, you hit the ceiling (or any other obstruction, like a beam) and drop down again. It's best to have a low jumping-skill and augment it with a spell instead.

Only two advantages are really worthwhile: Regenerate Health and Spell Absorption. The first one is especially helpful on the early levels, when you have fewer hit points. Spell Absorption is a must for

anyone who is using a lot of spellcasting. Remember, you'll be up against many enemy spellcasters, and you can always use the energy.

Characters automatically have Int (intelligence) in points. Mages should make that 3x Int, and others may want 2x. Remember, building up stats over the game will be a slow process, so you need to make the most of what you have.

Regarding disadvantages, I don't recommend taking Low Tolerance or Critical Weakness to spell types, unless you really need the extra points. Enemy mages have a habit of sending barrages of mixed types your way, and several hostiles bombarding you at once can be lethal.

Take a few Forbidden Weapons. As mentioned above, you really need only one melee weapon and a bow. Mark all the rest as forbidden for extra points.

Here's the rundown of other disadvantages:

Forbidden Armor There is no leather or chain armor in BATTLESPIRE; everything is plate. What makes something light, medium, or heavy is its armor class or how much protection you get from it. If you restrict yourself to light armor, the items you can wear will have only a point or two of protection.

Forbidden Material This is a tricky one. This time around, it's the forbidden material *and* everything above it. So if you take forbidden material mithril, you won't be able to use anything made of adamantium, ebony, Orcish, or Daedric, either. This is not a good idea.

No Regen of Spell Points Take it, especially if you're a mage. There's no resting in this game, anyway. The one drawback is that you won't be able to use restore potions or Magica Resartus items to replenish mana. However, between all the spellcasting monsters, plus the special restorative gems (these *do* work), you shouldn't be in bad shape by taking this disadvantage.

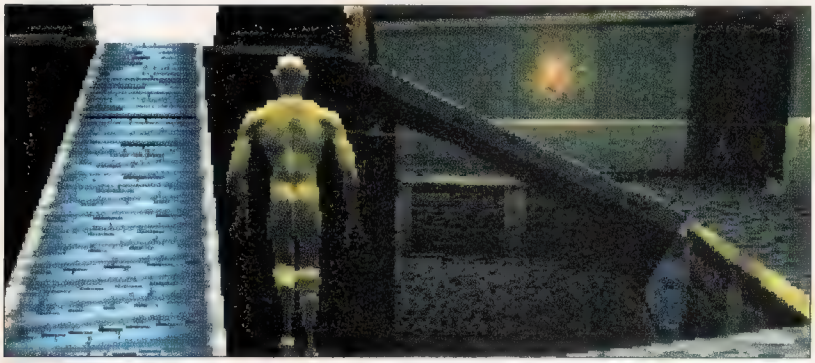
BRIDGE TOO NEAR Falling off this gorge is just one of the action-game enhancements to BATTLESPIRE. Be sure to beef up your swimming skills.

Race Question

When allocating build points in the game, always build up stats. High stats are the only way to have high skills.

You should try to match what you have in mind with a particular race. Redguards and Nords are best if you plan on mainly fighting; Bretons and Dark Elves are better if you want to do mostly spellcasting. High Elves provide a mix of both.

I wouldn't pick Wood Elves for anything; their skills are far too limited to make them worthwhile. And remember: That stuff about a particular race being "hardy" or "spell-resistant" and so on is just fluff this time around; race has no effect on stats. Go only by skill adds when choosing a race.



YOU RANG? Casting the Monster Summoning spell will bring forth this guy, who will help you out in desperate times.

Spell Check

The spells you choose at the start of the game are likely to be almost the only ones you have. Spell scrolls are very rare; their chance of appearing as random items is low (about 10 percent), and there are no "fixed" spell scrolls at all. Further, you won't be able to choose any new spells as you go through the spire. The build points you receive between levels can be used only to increase skills and stats. The only sure way to have the spells you want is to take them at the start when the character is created.

Dispel Magic is almost indispensable. On level 2, the Spider Daedra casts Poison (a continuous damage spell). On levels 6 and 7, you will be up against Daedra Lords and Counts, who cast Continuous Damage spells, in multiples. Without Dispel Magic, you'll be going through healing potions and items quite rapidly, as these guys have a lot of mana.

Cure Health is the basic healing spell, and everyone can benefit from having this one.

Etherealize can get you through many nasty situations. While ethereal, you can run past monsters and take no damage from either blows or spells. This will be very handy on Level 7.

Monster Summoning calls in a "friend" to help in desperate situations. It gives your opponents another target, and your summoned monster also fights for you.

Teleport can get you out of bad situations (like drowning), and make some travel easier.

Spell Reflection and **Resistance** are handy, and become more so on the

Combat Strategies

Not everyone is hostile. Sometimes, monsters will stand there and watch you closely, but won't attack unless you do first. Dragging around all those strange sigils can help here. Certain monsters (there is no way to tell, alas) will not attack if you have the right one with you.

Talk to the people you meet, even in the middle of combat. Only the Vermai can't talk. All the other characters are capable of chatting. Some may not care to speak with you; these are almost invariably hostile. This doesn't mean that something will become friendly if you talk with it, but you can occasionally pick up some information, and yes, once in a while, turn them neutral or bring them to your side.

LET'S TALK THIS OVER Talking with your enemies in BATTLESPIRE might actually save you a few hit points now and then.

All spellcasters have the same problem you do: limited mana. When they run out, they can't cast any more spells. Typically, they use all their magic attacks (and protections) immediately in one massive barrage. They also don't care who gets in the way. So one tactic is to try and position yourself with a non-magic critter between you and whoever is casting spells. Also, dodging and ducking behind obstacles or around corners can help keep you alive; never just stand around if you're being attacked by spells.

Use bows. There will be many occasions in the game when monsters are across a gap of some sort and can't reach you. This is the time to haul out your trusty bow and pick them off, particularly when they've run out of mana.

Call for backup. Summoning a monster or two can be a great help if you're in a bad situation. They distract the enemy from your presence, and may even kill a hostile or two—if you're lucky.

Run. Don't be ashamed to retreat in tough circumstances. If a critter is blocking the way to an important location, draw it out, and try to get around it. Of course, you have to be careful that you're not running into something as bad as, or worse than, what you're dodging at the moment. If you have a clear path to an area where you can jump across to a safe platform, do that, and get your opposition with a bow (or spells). Also, if you run far enough away from something, it may stop chasing you.

Use spells on found items. Unfortunately, you'll have to take notes on these things so you know what you have to work with. Start with the character-creation screen's magic-equipment list. As you highlight each item, you'll be told what the spell does. Write that down, along with the descriptive title. For example, "Magica Resartus" restores mana. Any item that has this in the title will do the same. Look carefully for scrolls on all the levels that give explanations of those obscure titles. In some cases, you may not find an explanation; you will then have to experiment to find out what the item does.

Watch wounded enemies. Often, wounded opponents will move away from you and stop attacking. Generally—though not always—they will not resume fighting unless you go after them first. They may also decide to fight again if you talk to them and the conversation doesn't go well.

Save often. This is especially important after a rough fight, before opening any doors, and before leaving a level (just in case you decide you allocated your build points wrong).

Good luck! In the meantime, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the usual ways. Until next time, happy adventuring!

later levels, when you're running into crowds of spell-casting monsters (Level 7 is all spellcasters).

Shield and **Fire Shield** are good if you decide to take armor disadvantages for more build points, and are also beneficial when you are up against hard-hitting monsters.

Cause Damage is the main attack form for the mage character. If you're going to be fighting mainly with weapons, you don't need this spell. Keep in mind it will probably need to be reconfigured many times throughout the game, as it contains within it all the usual attack-spell types (fire, frost, and so on), plus near/distant targeting.

Continuous Damage Its duration will never be greater than one round, making it useless for attack purposes. Don't use it in solo play.

Confusion is also worthless here. It is a spell intended for the multiplayer version of the game. Don't take this if you're playing solo.

Many items found during the game duplicate these and other spells. However, each use of an item's spell ability decreases the item's durability. There is no way to repair anything as it wears down; you can only replace the old item with a new one.

Don't go by the manual for the controlling stats of spells. They are not entirely correct. Look at the spell list when choosing spells to see which stat actually affects a particular spell.

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CG TIPS!

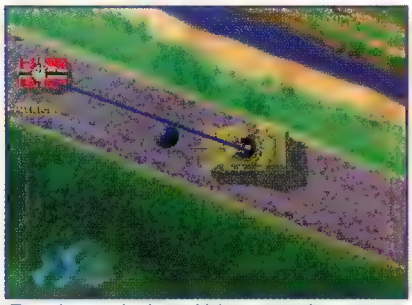
Strategy/Wargames

Close Combat 2

When playing the Allied side, using your paratroops to take bridges before the Germans can demolish them is crucial to early success in the campaign games. Here are a few tips toward that end:

SON BRIDGE

If you've got only five seconds when you reach the Son Bridge, you've used too much time to take Son Town. You have to secure the town in the first assault *and* choose to wait only one hour. Otherwise the Germans at the Son Bridge will be prepared to blow it as soon as you show up.



To make certain that vehicles move where you need them, micromanagement is the name of the game. This Achilles is being moved in short hops to keep it from straying off the road and becoming bogged down.

ARNHEM RAIL BRIDGE

The Rail Bridge takes a little more luck. Your best chance is to run a team under the bridge at the approach. You don't have to be on the bridge to control it (you can mess with the wiring under the bridge). Take a reconnaissance team or two to the entrance. Use the Vickers machine-gun and smoke to make sure you can take the entrance. Have all the other teams fire on any German team that opens up. Next, sneak your recon team down the bridge. Use a rifle team to grab the approach from underneath. Your recon team won't make it to the rail bridge objective before the Germans can blow it, but with the first two objectives controlled, it will buy you an extra minute of time. By now, your Bren and rifle teams should have suppressed all the Germans, and it's time for the big rush to the last objective before the timer goes out. —*Patrick Miller*

While this German Jagdpanther is occupied with infantry to its front, a British PIAT antitank team sneaks up from the rear for the kill. Stripping infantry support away from enemy armor is crucial for this tactic to succeed.

Lords of Magic

There are eight religions in LORDS, each associated with a separate race: Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Chaos, Order, Life, and Death. The trick is always to combine your race with others as quickly as possible. So, if you are the Life-worshipping elves, you really want to conquer the Dwarves, or ally yourself with them as soon as you can. Even if you hold no dwarfish towns or temples, a good relationship with the Dwarfish leader will allow an Elven hero to trade for all the infantry she needs. Similarly, if you are a Fire worshiper, you will need the help of Order or Life missile troops, and you could well use some Dwarfish infantry to boot. The dwarves have great armor and high hit-points, which means they can take a lot of damage while the rest of your army moves into position, fires missiles or magic spells, or just generally hangs around watching.

Our other essential tip? Make sure to get the patch! —*Tim Carter*

Action

Sub Culture

Are the Procha or the Bohine giving you trouble? Can't handle the Mutant Fish or the Pirates? Next time you need help under the sea, try out these cheat codes. Just type the word in when you're in the sub, and the cheat should immediately take effect. Now you can show that Walker who's boss!

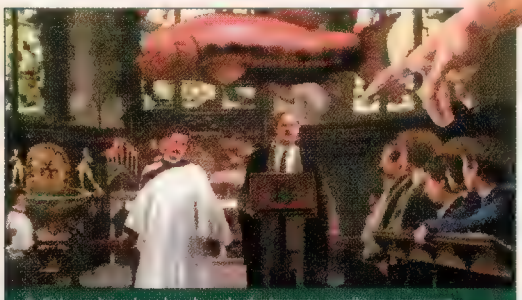
—*Thierry Nguyen*

kamikaze: self-destruct
refill: replenishes all shields
mutant: increases radoff level
billy: speeds up the sub
tick: adds Geiger counter
didit: mission success
bedlk: god mode
haveall: enable access to all missions
wonga: gives 1,000,000 credits (maximum)
tonka: increases hull strength by 20 percent

Classics & Puzzles

Monty Python's The Meaning of Life

While all of the hot spots in the game are fairly easy to find, multiple clicking on each hot spot can turn up a few Easter eggs—even on the first CD (which, in general, has less funny jokes—see Charles Ardai's review in this issue's Classics/Puzzles section). Some of our favorites:



A fish swimming in church during an endless sermon

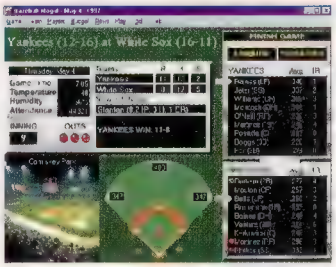
...us to see Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny and Alexander*

Simulation/Space

Red Baron II

Sports

Baseball Mogul



It's important to get off to good start in Mogul, especially when you're playing on higher levels of difficulty. As in real estate, only three things really matter when picking a ball club: location, location, and location. So, even though you may be a dyed-in-the-wool Brewers fan, be warned that the chances of building the Milwaukee club into a perennial contender are hampered by the city's small, fickle fan base.

For the best results, select a large market team with loyal fans that have a high per-capita income. Such clubs will provide you with plenty of cash in the early years to begin building your dynasty. Some recommended teams that fit the winning profile include the Orioles, Braves, Dodgers, Yankees, Cubs, and White Sox. At the other end of the cash spectrum, avoid the Reds, A's, Royals, Pirates, Tigers, Mariners, and Brewers, unless you believe that poverty builds character.

While on-field success and intelligent marketing can gradually change fan loyalty, this may take a decade or more. Fielding a winning team is a great way to increase profits, though. In Mogul, a consistently last-place team will sell about 50 percent fewer tickets than a .500 ball club, while a perennial world champion will sell about 70 percent *more* than an average team. —*Dennis McCauley*

Tony LaRussa 3, Tony 4, and Old Time Baseball

HotSpot

We at *CGW* have always liked Nick Keren's baseball utilities, and Nick's Web site has recently garnered a *GameSpot* HotSpot Award, along with a Tony LaRussa's Tournment of Champions designation. In particular, fans of Tony LaRussa 4 will want to check out Keren's latest fixes for that game, which fill some huge realism gaps. Keren also hits a big home run with his updates for Stormfront's Old Time Baseball, now compatible with Tony 3 (and even some Tony 4) utilities. So, what are you waiting for? Dust off your copies of Old Time Baseball and Tony LaRussa, and check out Nick's Web site at http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/NickKeren.

▸▸▸Continued from pg 213

don't worry, you're armed to the teeth and you're flying with wingmen.

Begin by following the waypoint indicator to defend Havoc group Beta from fighter attack. Next, join GP fighter group Lambda to eliminate enemy droids. You'll be ordered to drop a beacon, but wait until all the opposition has been quashed.

Hover above the Nanosoft complex and enlist your wingmen to destroy the defensive gunboats. Go it alone and you're dead meat, guaranteed. Now enter the main compound and use your cannons to blast any ground foes. Gun turrets will also draw your fire, but eliminate the ground troops first, because they are more skilled at hitting the moving target you present. This is a busy mission, but you should find time to recharge your shields and, if you're careful, use the Nanosoft rearming station.

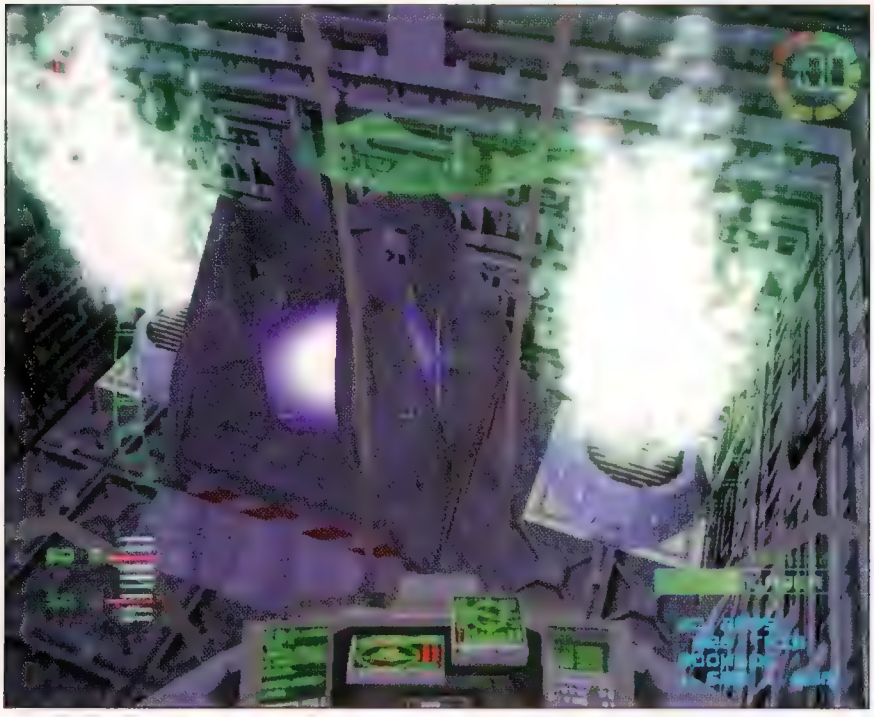
When the radio dispatchers announce that all enemies have been destroyed, locate your mobile command post, which should now have a large transport parked nearby. Land on the truck, pick up the air fuel bombs, and unload them over Nanosoft HQ on the building shaped like an X.

Cheat Codes

Here are some other fun cheats you can use in G-Police. Once again, enter the codes from the main menu screen. Confirmation of your cheat will appear on the screen. You can use multiple cheats, and they should work with both new and saved games:

Pantalon	Enables all secret missions in Training menu	**Benihill**	Benny Hill cars
		Doobies	Infinite Shields
Woowoo	Havoc Sirens	**Stattoe**	In-game info
Supacam	Enemy FallCam		

FULLY LOADED With all cheats and auxiliary codes enabled, your main menu screen should look something like this.



POWER OFF In the final mission of G-Police, you must destroy a series of power nodes to gain access to your primary objective: the central core of Nanosoft's capital ship.

Mission 35: It Blowed Up Real Good!

The final mission is a killer. Your main objective is to destroy the Nanosoft capital ship, and it ain't easy. First, protect your GP units by taking out all attacking Nanosoft fighters. When you're ordered to, fly to the entrance of the dome and nab a 1000kg bomb from friendly forces.

Follow your waypoint to the cap ship and enter the ship through its ventilation ducts. Fly carefully and destroy all the power nodes you encounter. This will gain you access to the central core. Be sure to keep a mental map of your route through the air shafts because you'll soon have to beat a hasty retreat.

After you enter the central core, blast all droids and gun turrets. Then fly at a safe distance above the core, drop your bomb, and get the hell out. Ignore any droids or turrets you might have missed while you were coming in. You'll have only a few minutes before the core explodes and the cap ship crumbles.

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Release Date: NOW PC $229

'CH PRO THROTTLE' Loaded with programmability and functionality. Easy point-and-click programming capabilities. 20 Programmable functions, storing over 400 macros. You can program each of the four 4-way switches and four push buttons on the device to do whatever you would like.
CH Products (Hardware)
Release Date:NOW PC $84

'ULTIMATE RPG ARCHIVES' 12 award-winning RPG's in one package! Bard's Tale,M&M World of Xeen, Stonekeep, Ultima Underworld I&II, Dragon Wars, Wasteland, Wizardry Gold. A must-have collection.
CH Products (Roleplaying)
Release Date:NOW PC CD

Price Before Rebate $30
Instant Rebate $_.50
Price After Rebate $29.50*

'BALDUR'S GATE' is set in the legendary Forgotten Realms campaign world. Uses a transparent interface an gameplay that uses a real-time modification of the ADD rules system. There are over 60 monsters to fight, you control a party of six each with unique abilities and personas.
Interplay (Roleplaying)
Release Date: 8/98 PC CD $45

'MIGHT & MAGIC VI' The Mandate of Heaven, the newest M & M edition contains an integral time clock with multiple plots and story lines. Unique 'skill based' character development and over 1000 miles of virtual terrain!
3DO/New World (Roleplaying)
Release Date: NOW PC CD $46

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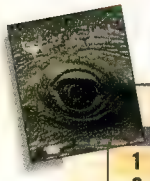
THE COMPUTER GAMING POLL

A MONTHLY SURVEY OF *CGW* SUBSCRIBERS

Each month, 2,000 *CGW* subscribers are selected at random to rate 100 computer games. The results of that poll are combined with the results of previous months to yield a cumulative average for the best plays in gaming. If you receive a ballot, please return it with your ratings so that other gamers and game publishers can benefit from your feedback.



TOP ACTION GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Quake Pack 2: Dissolution of Eternity	id Software/Rogue	8.81
2	Quake Pack 1: Scourge of Armagon	id Software/Ritual	8.78
3	Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II	LucasArts	8.49
4	Duke Nukem 3D	3D Realms	8.22
5	Tomb Raider	Eidos	8.19
6	Quake	id Software	8.01
7	The Need for Speed SE	EA	7.90
8	Moto Racer	EA	7.72
9	Crusader: No Regret	EA/Origin	7.66
10	Interstate '76	Activision	7.39

TOP ADVENTURE GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	The Pandora Directive	Access	8.21
2	Gabriel Knight 2	Sierra	8.19
3	The Curse of Monkey Island	LucasArts	7.83
4	Twinsen's Odyssey	Activision	7.82
5	RAMA	Sierra	7.68
6	Riven	Red Orb Ent.	7.67
	Realms of the Haunting	Interplay	7.67
8	The Neverhood	DreamWorks	7.60
9	The Last Express	Red Orb Ent.	7.49
10	Circle of Blood	Virgin	7.48

TOP CLASSIC/PUZZLE GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	You Don't Know Jack 3	Berkeley Systems	8.59
2	You Don't Know Jack 2	Berkeley Systems	8.51
3	You Don't Know Jack	Berkeley Systems	8.20
4	You Don't Know Jack TV	Berkeley Systems	8.07
	You Don't Know Jack Movies	Berkeley Systems	8.07
6	You Don't Know Jack Sports	Berkeley Systems	7.70
7	Power Chess	Sierra	7.30
8	Lose Your Marbles	SegaSoft	6.58
9	—		
10	—		

TOP SIMULATION/SPACE COMBAT GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Wing Commander IV	EA/Origin	8.28
2	AH-64 Longbow	EA/Origin	8.08
3	MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries	Activision	7.90
4	Silent Hunter	SSI	7.83
5	U.S. Marine Fighters	EA	7.79
6	EF2000	Ocean	7.56
7	Flight Simulator 98	Microsoft	7.49
	U.S. Navy Fighters	EA	7.49
9	Heavy Gear	Activision	7.45
10	Advanced Tactical Fighters	EA	7.35

TOP SPORTS GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Links LS	Access	8.61
2	NHL 98	EA Sports	8.49
3	NBA Live 98	EA Sports	8.38
4	NASCAR Racing 2	Sierra	8.18
5	NHL 97	EA Sports	8.05
6	Grand Prix 2	MicroProse	7.97
7	NBA Live 97	EA Sports	7.91
8	Triple Play 98	EA Sports	7.76
9	Jack Nicklaus 4	Accolade	7.61
10	Triple Play 97	EA Sports	7.42

TOP STRATEGY GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Heroes II: Price of Loyalty	New World Computing	9.09
2	WarCraft II Expansion Disk	Blizzard	8.83
3	WarCraft II	Blizzard	8.71
4	Heroes II	New World Computing	8.69
	Civilization II	MicroProse	8.69
6	Total Annihilation	GT Interactive	8.68
7	Red Alert	Virgin/Westwood	8.66
8	Red Alert: Counterstrike	Virgin/Westwood	8.41
9	C&C: Covert Operations	Virgin/Westwood	8.16
10	Civilization II: Scenarios	MicroProse	8.15

TOP ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Diablo	Blizzard	8.63
2	Fallout	Interplay	8.38
3	Daggerfall	Bethesda	7.29
4	Anvil of Dawn	New World Computing	7.09
5	Lands of Lore II	Westwood	6.83
6	Ultima Online	Origin	6.19
7	—		
8	—		
9	—		
10	—		

TOP WARGAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Steel Panthers II Campaign Disk	SSI	8.68
2	Steel Panthers Campaign Disk	SSI	8.58
3	Panzer General II	SSI	8.52
4	Sid Meier's Gettysburg	Firaxis	8.35
5	Steel Panthers II	SSI	8.27
6	Battleground: Shiloh	TalonSoft	7.99
7	Tigers on the Prowl 2	HPS	7.97
8	Battleground: Bull Run	TalonSoft	7.88
9	Battleground: Napoleon in Russia	TalonSoft	7.87
10	Battleground: Antietam	TalonSoft	7.86

		GAME	COMPANY	TYPE	SCORE
★	1	Heroes II: Price of Loyalty	New World Comp.	ST	9.09
	2	WarCraft II Expansion Disk	Blizzard	ST	8.83
★	3	Quake Pack 2: Dissolution of Eternity	id Software/Rogue	AC	8.81
	4	Quake Pack 1: Scourge of Armagon	id Software/Ritual	AC	8.78
	5	WarCraft II	Blizzard	ST	8.71
	6	Heroes II	New World Comp.	ST	8.69
		Civilization II	MicroProse	ST	8.69
	8	Total Annihilation	GT Interactive	ST	8.68
★		Steel Panthers II Campaign Disk	SSI	WG	8.68
	10	Red Alert	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8.66
★	11	Diablo	Blizzard	RP	8.63
★	12	Links LS	Access	SP	8.61
★	13	You Don't Know Jack 3	Berkeley Systems	CP	8.59
	14	Steel Panthers Campaign Disk	SSI	WG	8.58
	15	Panzer General II	SSI	WG	8.52
	16	NHL 98	EA Sports	SP	8.49
		Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II	LucasArts	AC	8.49
		You Don't Know Jack 2	Berkeley Systems	CP	8.49
	19	Red Alert: Counterstrike	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8.41
	20	NBA Live 98	EA Sports	SP	8.38
		Fallout	Interplay	RP	8.38
	22	Sid Meier's Gettysburg	Firaxis	WG	8.35
★	23	Wing Commander IV	EA/Origin	SI	8.28
	24	Steel Panther II	SSI	WG	8.27
	25	Duke Nukem 3D	3D Realms	AC	8.22
★	26	The Pandora Directive	Access	AD	8.21
	27	You Don't Know Jack	Berkeley Systems	CP	8.20
	28	Tomb Raider	Eidos	AC	8.19
		Gabriel Knight 2	Sierra	AD	8.19
	30	NASCAR Racing 2	Sierra	SP	8.18
	31	C&C: Covert Operations	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8.16
	32	Civilization II: Scenarios	MicroProse	ST	8.15
	33	You Don't Know Jack Movies	Berkeley Systems	CP	8.13
	34	Civilization II: Fantastic Worlds	MicroProse	ST	8.12
	35	AH-64 Longbow	EA/Origin	SI	8.08
	36	You Don't Know Jack TV	Berkeley Systems	CP	8.07
	37	NHL 97	EA Sports	SP	8.05
	38	Quake	id Software	AC	8.01
	39	Battleground: Shiloh	TalonSoft	WG	7.99
	40	Tigers on the Prowl 2	HPS	WG	7.97
		Grand Prix 2	MicroProse	SP	7.97
	42	NBA Live 97	EA Sports	SP	7.91
	43	The Need for Speed SE	EA	AC	7.90
		MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries	Activision	SI	7.90
	45	Battleground: Bull Run	TalonSoft	WG	7.88
	46	Battleground: Napoleon In Russia	TalonSoft	WG	7.87
	47	Battleground: Antietam	TalonSoft	WG	7.86
	48	Silent Hunter	SSI	SI	7.83
		Curse of Monkey Island	LucasArts	AD	7.83
	50	Twinsen's Odyssey	Activision	AD	7.82

	GAME	COMPANY	TYPE	SCORE
51	U.S. Marine Fighters	EA	SI	7.79
52	Achtung Spitfire	Avalon Hill	ST	7.76
	Triple Play 98	EA Sports	SP	7.76
54	Moto Racer	EA	AC	7.72
55	Battleground: Waterloo	TalonSoft	WG	7.69
	You Don't Know Jack Sports	Berkeley Systems	CP	7.69
57	Rama	Sierra	AD	7.68
58	Realms of the Haunting	Interplay	AD	7.67
	Riven	Red Orb Ent.	AD	7.67
60	Crusader: No Regret	EA/Origin	AC	7.66
61	Jack Nicklaus 4	Accolade	SP	7.61
62	The Neverhood	DreamWorks	AD	7.60
63	Jagged Alliance: Deadly Games	Sir-Tech	ST	7.58
64	EF2000	Ocean	SI	7.56
65	East Front	TalonSoft	WG	7.51
	Battleground: Gettysburg	TalonSoft	WG	7.51
	Dungeon Keeper	EA/Bullfrog	ST	7.51
68	Flight Simulator 98	Microsoft	SI	7.49
	U.S. Navy Fighters	EA	SI	7.49
	Last Express	Red Orb Ent.	AD	7.49
71	Circle of Blood	Virgin	AD	7.48
72	Heavy Gear	Activision	SI	7.45
	Spycraft	Activision	AD	7.45
74	Triple Play 97	EA Sports	SP	7.42
75	Power Chess	Sierra	CP	7.40
76	Interstate '76	Activision	AC	7.39
	Age of Rifles Campaign Disk	SSI	WG	7.39
	MDK	Playmates/Shiny	AC	7.39
79	Dark Reign	Activision	ST	7.37
	Abe's Oddysee	GT Interactive	AC	7.37
	NBA Live 96	EA Sports	SP	7.37
82	CivNet	MicroProse	ST	7.36
83	Advanced Tactical Fighters	EA	SI	7.35
	PGA Tour Pro	EA Sports	SP	7.35
	Myth	Bungie	ST	7.35
86	Fantasy General	SSI	ST	7.34
	Lords of the Realm II	Sierra	ST	7.34
	X-COM 3	MicroProse	ST	7.34
89	FPS Football Pro '96	Sierra	SP	7.32
90	Daggerfall	Bethesda	RP	7.29
91	Leisure Suit Larry 7	Sierra	AD	7.26
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94	FPS Football Pro '97	Sierra	SP	7.24
95	Imperialism	SSI	ST	7.19
	Theme Hospital	EA/Bullfrog	ST	7.19
	FIFA 97	EA Sports	SP	7.19
	Hexen II	Activision	AC	7.19
	Robert E. Lee: Civil War General	Sierra	WG	7.19
100	Virtual Pool	VR Sports	SP	7.16

Games on unnumbered lines are tied with game on line above. ★ = Top game of type. Red = New Game, AD = Adventure, RP = Role-Playing, SI = Simulation/Space Combat, ST = Strategy, WG = Wargame, AC = Action, SP = Sports, CP = Classic/Puzzle. Games are retired after two years and become eligible for the Hall of Fame.

WELCOME TO THE COOPERSTOWN OF COMPUTER GAMES. Here you'll find, raised upon pedestals, the games that broke the records, established the benchmarks, and held gamers in delighted trances for hours untold.

Alone in the Dark (I-Motion, 1992)
Lovecraftian horror goes 3D, with shifting camera angles adding to the creepy atmosphere.

Battle Chess (Interplay,1988)
The Franklin Mint of computer chess games with violent and funny animation disguising a solid chess engine.

Betrayal at Krondor (Dynamix,1993)
As rich and imaginative as Raymond Feist's world itself; its 3D perspective was fresh.

Chessmaster (Software Toolworks, 1986)
The Cadillac of castling, this chess masterpiece gets better with each version.

Command & Conquer (Virgin/Westwood Studios, 1995)
Moved beyond DUNE II with innovative features and multiplayer play, almost single-handedly causing the current real-time strategy game explosion.

Dungeon Master (FTL Software, 1987)
Trend-setting graphics, digitized stereo, and great hack-and-slash from a decade ago.

Day of the Tentacle (LucasArts, 1993)
Offbeat sequel to MANIAC MANSION; the interactive equivalent of a classic Chuck Jones cartoon.

DOOM (id Software, 1993)
Revolutionized PC action games and network gaming; surpassed in technology but not gameplay.

Earl Weaver Baseball (EA,1986)
Revolutionary physics-based baseball game that pleased both action and statistics fans.

Empire (Interstel, 1978)
WWII in space, this mainframe transplant brought elegant mechanics, depth, and unending replayability to the PC.

F-19 Stealth Fighter (MicroProse,1988)
A "thinking man's" sim, with great missions, in which sneaking around is as fun as dogfighting.

Falcon 3.0 (Spectrum HoloByte, 1991)
Tough, detailed jet sim with ambitious AI, graphics, and connectivity to match its realism.

Front Page Sports Football Pro (Dynamix, 1993)
Physics-based system, good AI, and unmatched career play make this the ultimate in pigskin play.

Gettysburg: The Turning Point (SSI, 1986)
First variable order of battle changed the look of all American Civil War games on the PC.

Gunship (MicroProse, 1989)
Great character continuity, R&R for fatigued pilots, and even sick leave; best chopper fare until JANE'S LONGBOW.

Harpoon (360 Pacific, 1989)
In-depth modern naval battles in real-time, based on Cold War fears.

Kampfgruppe (SSI, 1985)
Armored warfare on WWII's Eastern Front, offered engaging battles on multiple platforms.

King's Quest V (Sierra On-Line, 1990)
Redefined the graphic adventure with non-text-based parser and VGA graphics.

Lemmings (Psygnosis, 1991)
The lovable cartoon Lilliputians were hits on every platform.

Links 386 Pro (Access Software, 1992)
Topped the leader board in graphics and realism for its era.

M-1 Tank Platoon (MicroProse, 1989)
Realistic sim that properly focused on armored formations rather than single vehicles; good mission designs.

Master of Magic (MicroProse, 1994)
The atmosphere and variety of *Magic: The Gathering* with the sophistication of CIVILIZATION.

Master of Orion (MicroProse, 1993)
Remarkable diplomatic AI; deep and varied technology tree; aliens required radically different playing styles.

Mech Brigade (SSI, 1985)
Modern armored battles with improved KAMPFGRUPPE system and more realism.

MechWarrior 2 (Activision, 1995)
A serious treatment of Mech design and resource management, combined with complex and addictive battles, legitimized "giant robot simulations."

Might & Magic (New World Computing, 1986)
First-person, maze-based RPG with huge environment and tough tactical combat.

M.U.L.E. (EA, 1983)
A landmark multiplayer strategy game that had no weapons of destruction, just cutthroat competition that made economics fun.

Panzer General (SSI, 1994)
A truly fun wargame with an elegant interface, great campaigns, strong AI, good graphics, and impressive sound.

Red Baron (Dynamix, 1990)
WWI air combat with great graphics, incredible realism, and a versatile replay feature.

Sid Meier's Civilization (MicroProse, 1991)
CGW's #1-rated game of all time; indescribably addictive world conquest/exploration game.

Sid Meier's Pirates (MicroProse, 1987)
Without a doubt the most successful hybrid of all time, this combines pirate adventure with elements of action, role-playing, and strategy games.

Sid Meier's Railroad Tycoon (MicroProse, '90)
SIMCITY meets 1830 with robber barons for emphasis.

SimCity (Maxis, 1987)
Urban planning with fascinating consequences and challenges; the first great software toy.

Starflight (EA, 1986)
Depth, great characters, and a good sci-fi storyline set early standards for RPGs.

The Bard's Tale (EA, 1985)
Pioneered three-point animation, 3D color mazes, and automapping.

The Secret of Monkey Island (LucasArts, '90)
Comedy adventure that set new standards in writing quality and social sensitivity.

Their Finest Hour (LucasArts, 1989)
WWII sim with great campaigns and crew member options that some current sims lack.

TIE Fighter (LucasArts, 1994)
Most satisfying *Star Wars* space-combat game to date lets you live on the dark side.

Ultima III (Origin Systems, 1983)
Coherency and surprising subtlety emphasized role-playing, and set the tone for later ULTIMAS.

Ultima IV (Origin Systems, 1985)
High-concept RPG explored meaning of virtue and put the *role* in role-playing.

Ultima VI (Origin Systems, 1990)
RPG as morality play, replete with moral choices, realistic environs and more conversations.

Ultima Underworld (Origin Systems, 1992)
The first truly 3D RPG, and still the most convincing; its dungeon walls were nicely "painted" with texture-mapped graphics.

War in Russia (SSI, 1984)
More realistic than EASTERN FRONT, it captured the essence of the largest land campaign in history.

Wasteland (Interplay, 1986)
Derived from Mike Stackpole's *Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes*, this is the definitive postapocalyptic RPG.

Wing Commander (Origin Systems, 1990)
A hot spaceflight engine, unfolding story path, and great characters.

Wing Commander II (Origin Systems, 1991)
Darker story, grittier feel, sound card advances, and tougher AI made this a sequel of sequels.

Wing Commander III (Origin Systems, 1994)
Surprisingly satisfying FMV space opera didn't lose the essence of the space-combat game.

Wizardry (Sir-Tech Software, 1981)
Defined the computer RPG with maze-based viewpoint and atmospheric spell names.

Wolfenstein 3-D (id Software, 1992)
Smooth scrolling action blastfest cleverly updated the original, and put shareware back on the map.

X-COM (MicroProse, 1994)
Premier tactical squad-level engine combined with alien tech research and pop culture for a sci-fi game nearly as addictive as CIVILAZATION.

Zork (Infocom, 1981)
The progenitor of adventure games on the PC; its humor and challenging puzzles seem timeless.

CGW ADVERTISER INDEX

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All-New CD

CGW's Redesigned Disc Is Easier to Use Than Ever

This month's CG-ROM features an all-new interface and software engine. We think you'll find it better looking and more useful than ever. If you have a 3D card, this month's demos should be a good way to show it off. Several games support 3D features, such as the fantasy strategy game WARHAMMER: DARK OMEN; the DESCENT-style shooter FORSAKEN; and the WWII tank-sim PANZER COMMANDER.

MAGIC: THE GATHERING lovers can test their multiplayer skills with MANALINK, while console-game fans can sink their teeth into CROC. If you dug INTERSTATE '76, get a load of the INTERSTATE '76 ARSENAL PACK. The road is calling for you.

But maybe Lara Croft is more your speed (and why wouldn't she be?). If that's the case, here's your chance to take her for a test drive, in our revised TOMB RAIDER II demo that's not time-stamped. All good things to those who wait.

Finally, we hope you'll take note of the very handy Reviews Index included on the CD. We'll provide this for you every month, so you can always have *CGW* ratings at your fingertips.

Now what are you waiting for? Boot up, load up, and get down!

HOT STUFF We've dressed up our CD interface a bit, to help show off juicy demos like FORSAKEN.

May CG-ROM Titles

TITLES	PLATFORM	DIRECTORY	EXECUTABLE
Begin 1.65	DOS	BEGIN165	begin.exe
Begin 2	DOS	BEGIN2	begin2.exe
Croc	W95	CROC	crocdemo.exe
Dark Omen	W95	DARKOMEN	setup.exe
EarthLink	W95	EARTHLNK	setup.exe
Forsaken	W95	FORSAKEN	setup.exe
Interstate '76 Arsenal	W95	ARSENAL	arsenal.exe
Longbow 2	W95	LONGBOW	lb2demo.exe
ManaLink	W95	MANALINK	setup.exe
Panzer Commander	W95	PANZER	setup.exe
Professional Gamers' League	W95	PGL	setup.exe
Quest for Glory V	W95	QUEST	setup.exe
Star Trek Quiz Show	W95	TREKTRIVIA	install.exe
Tomb Raider II (new level)	W95	TOMB2	setup.exe
Total Entertainment Network	W95	MANALINK	setup.exe
Uprising 3dfx ed.	W95	UPRISING	uprising3dfxdemo.exe
3D Control Center		3DCC	3dcc.exe
NV3 Tweak Utility for Riva 128 v2.1		NV3TWK21	nv3tweak.inf
Tweek for 3Dfx		TWEEK	tweak.exe
Heavy Gear patch		TOOLBOX	hgp187d.exe
Longbow 2 patch		TOOLBOX	lb2d3d.exe
Shadow Warrior patch		TOOLBOX	sw3dfx11.exe
Tomb Raider II patch		TOOLBOX	tr2p1.exe

WARHAMMER: DARK OMEN Play a Grudgebringer in this new 3D tactical fantasy game.

PANZER COMMANDER Think you can you handle multiple Shermans or Tigers? See for yourself in PANZER COMMANDER.

How to Get the CG-ROM

To subscribe to the CD-ROM version of the magazine, call (303) 665-8930. If you already receive the magazine without the CD, you must wait until your current subscription expires before receiving the CD version. Please address subscription complaints to cgw@neodata.com. Neodata is a magazine fulfillment house which is not owned or operated by Ziff-Davis.

How to Use the CG-ROM

The CD is Autoplay enabled and should begin upon loading it into the CD-ROM drive. Otherwise, select Start Menu in Windows 95, and type D:\RUN-ME (where D is the letter of your CD-ROM drive) to run it straight from the CD. Many demos require the disc to be in the CD-ROM drive in order to run; therefore, we recommend installing the demos from our disc.

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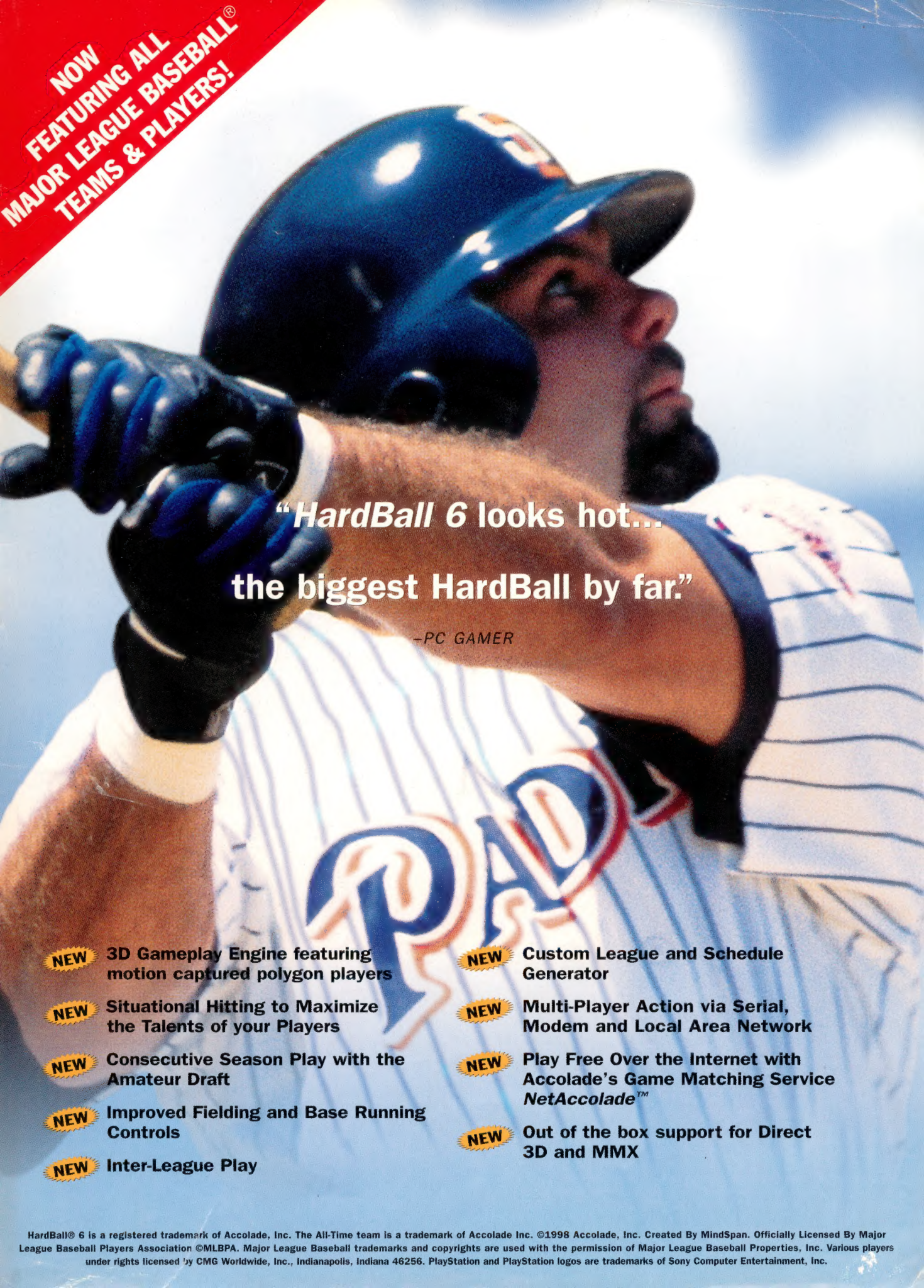
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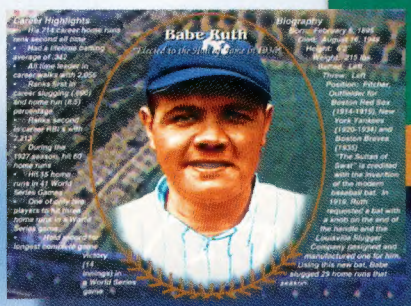

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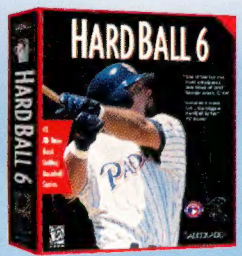

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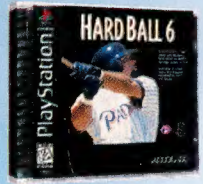

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